Joint Statement on the TPNW by Kiribati and Kazakhstan,
Thematic Debate at the
First Committee, 76th Session of the UN General Assembly

Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Teburoro Tito, Permanent Representative of Kiribati

Mr. Chair,

I have the honor of delivering a joint statement on behalf of Kazakhstan and my own country, Kiribati, on the positive obligations of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Distinguished Colleagues,

The First Meeting of the States Parties (1MSP) will be held in Vienna, Austria, in March 2022. We would like to suggest that the 1MSP should devote particular attention to the Treaty’s positive obligations in Articles 6 and 7. These provisions are central to the humanitarian goals of the Treaty and ensure that it addresses the harm from past use and testing of nuclear weapons as well as prevents future harm.

To highlight the importance and promote implementation of these provisions, we would further suggest that the 1MSP should examine victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance under a separate agenda item, or under individual agenda items, and encourage active participation by all states, international organizations, civil society groups, ICRC, and survivors and affected communities. The 1MSP should also follow the lead of other humanitarian disarmament treaties and adopt a final report, declaration, and action plan that address the positive obligations.

Over the coming months, states parties should focus on how to promote the obligations in Article 6 and 7 at the 1MSP.

Kazakhstan and Kiribati will help coordinate the drafting a working paper on the topic for the 1MSP and provide a forum for other like-minded states and relevant stakeholders to make them as widely inclusive and representative as possible.

Distinguished Colleagues,

We would also recommend the following guidelines for consideration by states parties as they prepare for 1MSP:

- States parties should recommit to the positive obligations in Article 6 and 7. In discussions and outcome documents, they should make clear that implementing these provisions is a priority and essential to achieving the humanitarian goals of the Treaty.

- States parties should further establish a framework for implementing the provisions, identifying initial action items (with deadlines where appropriate) and overarching principles. The framework and specific steps could be laid out in a 1MSP action plan.
States parties should also set deadlines and parameters for future reporting on national measures on victim assistance, environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance. In their reports, states parties should share their national expertise, document progress in implementation, and identify needs for which other states parties, in a position to do so, can provide assistance.

States parties should also create a mechanism for continuing work on the obligations contained in Articles 6 and 7 between MSPs. Ideally, the 1MSP could establish intersessional standing committees, but it could also explore using less formal working groups.

Either at the 1MSP or a future MSP, states parties could create a group composed of experts from states, international organizations, and civil society to discuss and evaluate the process of establishing an international trust fund for states parties that have been affected by the use or test of nuclear weapons. This group could examine precedent for such a trust fund from other humanitarian treaties.

States parties should ensure all voices are included at the 1MSP and in future discussions of positive obligations to assist victims, remediate the environment, and provide international cooperation and assistance. Those voices should include affected communities, civil society, ICRC, and international organizations.

In conclusion, we encourage all states parties and signatories to join our work in providing nuclear justice for the victims of nuclear weapons. We further call upon states to sign and ratify the TPNW.

Thank you