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# First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Distr.: General  
9 June 2022

English only

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Vienna, 21–23 June 2022

## Pathways To Advance Equitable, Just, and Restorative Nuclear Disarmament

### Working paper submitted by Global Zero

1. The mission of Global Zero and its international members, including hundreds of former heads of government, senior political leaders, military commanders, and national security experts from every nuclear-armed region of the world, is to champion and facilitate the verified elimination of all nuclear weapons and to rectify the enduring harms caused by the nuclear weapons complex. We fully support and share the commitment of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to seek universal prohibition and justice for impacted communities. The inherent dangers of nuclear weapons and the systems that uphold them vastly outweigh any perceived benefit, and dogmatic adherence to nuclear deterrence prevents countries from seriously addressing core security concerns that hold the world hostage to nuclear catastrophe.

2. Global Zero members envision a world where nuclear weapons programs are universally seen as barriers to peace, prosperity, equity, and justice, and all nuclear weapons are verifiably eliminated by date certain. We recognize communities impacted by the nuclear weapons complex deserve not only to be centered and supported, but to experience justice, equity, and healing. We believe multilateralism and diplomacy can and must drive a paradigm shift from national security to human-centered security.

3. Global Zero has developed an Action Plan that lays out a practical framework and time-bound plan for nuclear-armed states to reach an agreement on the elimination of all nuclear weapons.<sup>1</sup> There are no insurmountable technical barriers to achieving a world free from the threat of nuclear weapons and the harm of the nuclear weapons complex. The only barrier is political: it is a matter of nuclear-armed governments, driven by the will of the people, acting with urgency and resolve. The scarcity of plans and engagement from nuclear-armed states reflects the fact they have not seriously examined the challenges to be faced and have failed to take the risk of nuclear disaster as seriously as they should.

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<sup>1</sup> “Global Zero Action Plan,” Global Zero, accessed 09 June 2022, <https://www.globalzero.org/reaching-zero/>.

4. As State Parties take up Article 4 of the Treaty on deadlines for removal and destruction of nuclear weapons and an international authority to verify elimination, Global Zero recommends consideration of the following elements of the Action Plan:

- Nuclear-armed states can negotiate, sign, and ratify an agreement within ten years for the verifiable and irreversible elimination of all nuclear weapons by 2045.
- Within those ten years, individual and smaller groups of states can pursue similar or parallel steps toward elimination.
- It is vital for nuclear-armed states to engage in serious, sustained strategic security dialogue. Such dialogue must yield near-term progress on implementation of nuclear risk reduction and confidence-building measures, such as adoption of no first use policies and de-alerting, to guard against mistakes and miscalculation, enhance mutual trust, address nuclear-related security concerns, improve the viability of renewed disarmament talks, and set the table for universal elimination while avoiding the pitfall of requiring formal arms reduction agreements as a precondition for near-term progress.
- The technology and capabilities to verify compliance with a disarmament agreement to a high degree of confidence are within current capabilities, especially if augmented by both open source information and dedicated remote sensing and monitoring equipment. Joint work will be required to develop, validate, certify, and build confidence in the production and use of equipment and procedures to implement a global nuclear verification plan.
- To be effective, any alleged violation of key steps to eliminate existing nuclear weapons and prevent the reconstitution or proliferation of nuclear weapons must be quickly and effectively identified and investigated according to established rules. Challenges to effective enforcement of a global disarmament regime have much more to do with political and global legal behavior as they do with sensors and accounting. They can be resolved, but only if states internalize the risks associated with continuing the dangerous reliance on nuclear weapons for their security and dedicate themselves to addressing them through effective political and legal arrangements.
- Even in times of growing tensions, where legal restrictions and norms against nuclear weapons are eroding and violence is committed behind a shield of nuclear coercion and threat, progress can be made. History has shown relationships can change quickly and countries can cooperate on pressing nuclear matters even when locked in an adversarial dynamic. The elimination of nuclear weapons is within reach, so long as we build and leverage trust among governments, and in our collective ability to adapt to new conditions, threats, and opportunities.

5. As State Parties take up Article 6 and 7 of the Treaty on victim assistance and environmental remediation, and international cooperation and assistance respectively, Global Zero recommends inclusion of the following:

- It is essential that all states acknowledge that even apart from potential use, nuclear weapons are unjust and inflict grave harm by virtue of their existence. Moreover, there is not a monolithic identity to the frontline, Indigenous, or impacted communities who are historically and currently harmed by nuclear weapons programs and consistently excluded from security considerations and decision-making. As communities are rebuilt after these harms, it is essential that states listen to the individuals who have been affected by the development, testing, maintenance, and use of these weapons and work with community-led

organizations to find best solutions and practices for equitable, just, and democratic solutions to rebuild each individual community.

- The victims of nuclear weapons use and development are overwhelmingly members of the most disenfranchised communities, including but not limited to Indigenous communities, Black and communities of color, poor, and rural communities. The powerful few wield these weapons to create fear and distrust to dictate policy and uphold oppressive systems. Cooperation and diplomacy are undervalued and deprioritized, and a false sense of “security” rests on threats of staggering global humanitarian, environmental, and economic loss. It is essential that nuclear states disarm and commit to reallocating the funding and assets invested in these programs to benefit and uplift victims of these harms who have been disenfranchised for generations.
- Certain individuals in communities may be committed to staying in and rebuilding communities damaged by the nuclear weapons complex, whereas others may find the opportunity to start over in another location valuable. It is essential that all states implement opportunities for equitable and safe systems of immigration for all individuals regardless of race, gender, age, socio-economic status, religion, or sexual orientation.
- Throughout history and through the present, threats and potential effects of nuclear violence have created the potential for a “refugee crisis.” In the event that such a crisis occurs, it is the duty of all states to generate safe and equitable havens for refugees regardless of race, gender, age, socio-economic status, religion, or sexual orientation. Furthermore, states should implement processes to help reintegrate these individuals psychologically, culturally, and socio-economically into society once they are affirmed in a new location.
- The historic, immediate, and lasting effects of nuclear testing and uranium mining deserve acknowledgement and reparation. It is essential that states who have engaged in nuclear testing and/or uranium mining directly compensate communities in multiple ways, including access to healthcare, education, economic opportunities, and emotional support in order to rebuild after generations of degradation to human life, public health, and the environment.
- It is vital that nuclear-armed states acknowledge and address the historic and ongoing environmental damage caused by the development of these weapons, and commit to adequately funding decontamination and restoration of all impacted areas. Nuclear-armed states must acknowledge the catastrophic climate risks inherent in nuclear deterrence, and advance disarmament efforts as part of their commitment to ensure the continued habitability of the global ecosystem.

6. In order to advance an equitable, just, and restorative nuclear disarmament agenda, governments must acknowledge and address the historic and ongoing human and environmental damage caused by the development of these weapons, as well as the current power structures and disparities militating against global nuclear disarmament. We cannot ignore the past, present, and future harm caused by the development, testing, and maintenance of nuclear arsenals, and that all too often it is the most marginalized communities that are most affected. Nuclear weapons activities disproportionately affect marginalized communities, contaminating the environment and threatening the health of Indigenous communities, communities of color, and poor, rural communities. It is the job of all states to commit to uplifting these communities in order to make a safer and more resilient future.

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