



# NPT NEWS IN REVIEW

Civil society perspectives on the 2019 Preparatory Committee of the  
nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), 29 April–10 May 2019



Reaching Critical Will

10 May 2019  
Vol. 16, No. 7

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 1 | Editorial
- 2 | News in brief
- 3 | Mayors for Peace  
Joint Appeal for  
Common Ground  
on the NPT

The *NPT News in Review* is produced by the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom during meetings of NPT states parties.

The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of RCW or WILPF.

Editors: Ray Acheson and  
Allison Pytlak

[www.reachingcriticalwill.org](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org)  
[disarm@wilpf.org](mailto:disarm@wilpf.org)

## COURAGE AND POSSIBILITY

Ray Acheson | *Women's International League for Peace and Freedom*

Standing up to bullies is always hard. It takes courage and resilience. This week, Ambassador Syed Hussin of Malaysia and his team demonstrated this in spades. They listened to vehement criticisms from nuclear-armed states for the revised draft recommendations. The United States and France in particular accused the Chair of moving away from consensus and including elements in the recommendations that “undermine the NPT”. But rather than caving to pressure, the Chair simply turned the recommendations into a working paper. This will be forwarded to the 2020 Review Conference and can provide a basis of work there if states want.

The majority of states taking the floor made it clear that this is exactly what they want. For most delegations, the revised draft is the most balanced NPT document they have seen since 2010. It actually reflects the views of the entire membership of the NPT rather than just the nuclear-armed and nuclear-endorsing states parties. Standing by these recommendations rather than watering them down to appease the vocal minority was a revolutionary act, one that should give heart to the international community at a time when belligerence and bullying are the tune of the day.

“Balance is in the eye of the beholder,” noted the Singapore delegation in defence of the second draft, arguing that a document that reflects the majority view is balanced. The Netherlands, on the other hand, conflated the issue of balance and consensus, arguing that consensus means agreement by all, not the opinion of many or even the majority. As we have said before, consensus can be a useful process to help bring divergent positions together over time through deliberation and dialogue. But through practice at many UN forums it has turned into the equivalence of absolute unanimity, typically around the lowest common denominator. Consensus has been turned into a veto, into

the ability of one state to prevent action on an issue of importance to 192 other states.

Perhaps having over the years engrained this approach into their own sense of process, a number of nuclear weapon-endorsing states such as Australia, the Baltic states, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, and Republic of Korea undertook to protect the nuclear-armed states’ position against the revised recommendations. Using very similar language to each other, they said the draft “drifted away from consensus”. Several of these delegations admitted that the second draft improved the text related to some of their key priority issues, including risk reduction, transparency and reporting, gender, and more. Yet they asked the Chair to revert to his first draft—which would mean forsaking these improvements—because the second draft was further away from the US, UK, and French positions. It seems that these countries could have negotiated in good faith with the rest of the Treaty’s membership over issues of remaining concern to their delegation, were it not for the massive nuclear-armed elephant in the room. If they did not feel that they had to protect or actively promote the radical extremist view that every nuclear disarmament agreement made in the NPT context for the past fifty years is no longer relevant because of the “security environment,” they could probably have accepted the second draft recommendations with perhaps a few adjustments on a few issues.

It certainly seemed possible for delegations that felt uncomfortable with all of the revisions to the draft recommendations to nevertheless support the efforts of the Chair without demanding he revert to the earlier draft. Canada, for example, thanked the Chair for reflecting the views of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, of which it is a member, on some issues. While the Canadian ambassador noted that there

*Editorial, continued*

are some problematic elements for her delegation in the new draft, she also expressed her appreciation for the Chair's efforts to articulate where there is common ground. Both Australia and Canada argued that the discussions during this PrepCom have demonstrated where negotiations are possible, which is useful for the 2020 Review Conference.

This was the theme of the Chair's reflections on the PrepCom, which he published on Friday morning. He argued that there is more convergence than divergence in states parties' views, including their conviction of the NPT's importance and relevance. He urged states to move away from entrenched positions and to keep an open mind in order to avoid deadlock. This is a key message. But the persistent challenge, which has only grown throughout the past two review cycles, is the refusal of states that believe in their right to possess nuclear weapons or include them in their security doctrines to be willing to change this position. This position is anathema to the NPT itself, especially to its objectives and obligations of averting the danger of nuclear war, ending the nuclear arms race, and achieving the total

elimination of nuclear weapons. It is the primary reason why the NPT has not yet been fully implemented, nearly fifty years after its entry into force. And it will be the critical sticking point once again in 2020 unless the nuclear-armed and nuclear-enabling states begin to comply with international law, which stands firmly against nuclear weapons.

The rest of the world has a stake in this—but also a say. Just as the majority of governments, working with activists and the Red Cross, demonstrated by banning nuclear weapons, we are not beholden to power. "I am no longer accepting the things I cannot change," said Angela Davis. "I am changing the things I cannot accept." This is the spirit in which non-nuclear-armed states parties need to approach the 2020 Review Conference: a spirit that builds on the courage of the Malaysians to issue a balanced document at this PrepCom, a spirit that honours the work that so many have done over so many years to protect future generations from the scourge of nuclear war. Regardless of what we think is possible next year, we have the duty, and the right, to try to achieve that to which we have all agreed: total nuclear disarmament. •

**NEWS IN BRIEF**

*Katrin Geyer, WILPF and Alicia Sanders-Zakre, Arms Control Association*

The following reflects interventions on the closing day of the PrepCom.

**Comments on the revised draft recommendations**

- The African Group, Guatemala, Iran, Iraq, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, South Africa, and Venezuela considered the revised draft recommendations to be an improved basis for an outcome document.
- New Zealand said that the revised text provides more necessary balance across the Treaty's pillars.
- Guatemala and Peru stated that they were pleased to see strengthened language on the humanitarian consequences of the nuclear weapons in the revised text.
- Australia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Latvia (on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania), Luxembourg, Norway, & Spain stated that the chair should return to the original draft recommendations as a basis for discussion.
- Australia and Canada thanked the chair for including recommendations from the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative in the revised draft.
- Australia said that it could not accept revised language in the recommendations on the additional protocol, and Japan, the Netherlands, and Norway expressed concern about the revised language on safeguards, including the additional protocol.
- Canada, Latvia (on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania), Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Portugal stated that the original draft was better than the revised draft to reach consensus.
- Bulgaria, Hungary, Italy, Latvia (on behalf of Estonia and Lithuania), Luxembourg, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey stated that the revised draft moved further away from middle ground.
- Japan, the Netherlands, and Poland stated that the revised draft did not reflect the discussions in a balanced manner.
- Singapore stated that while many states claimed the revised draft lacks balance, balance is in the eye of the beholder.
- Portugal and the Republic of Korea welcomed new language on risk reduction in the revised draft.



*News in brief, continued*

- China, Japan, and Ukraine noted that their proposals were not included in the revised text.
- South Africa refuted that states should return to a prior document because the original draft had been superseded by discussions.
- Kazakhstan suggested adding a reference to the International Day Against Nuclear Tests on 29 August in paragraph 67.

**Other matters and closing remarks***Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)*

- France delivered a statement, endorsed by 70 states, that “strongly deplored the grave and undiminished threat to regional and international security” posed by ongoing ballistic missile programmes of the DPRK. It welcomed recent summits between the DPRK and the Republic of Korea, and the United States (US), respectively. It called on the DPRK to take concrete steps to abandon nuclear and ballistic missile programmes and to cease any related activities as set out in relevant UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCR). It urged the DPRK to fully return to the NPT and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. It called on all states to fully enforce all relevant UNSCR resolutions.
- China noted that the realisation of lasting peace on the Korean peninsula is in everyone’s interest. It called on NPT states parties to play a constructive role but noted that the NPT is not the appropriate forum for settling of the Korean issue.

*Syria*

- The US delivered a joint statement on behalf of 52 states, expressing “deep concern” over Syria’s continued non-compliance with the IAEA safeguards agreement in connection with its undeclared construction of the Dair Alzour nuclear reactor. It “echo[ed] the call of the IAEA Director General and Board of Governors for Syria to cooperate with the IAEA (...) and to provide the IAEA with access to all information, sites, material, and persons necessary for the IAEA to resolve all outstanding questions (...)”. The statement included concern that Dair Alzour reactor “had features comparable to the gas-cooled, graphite-moderated reactor at Yongbyon in the DPRK.”
- Syria argued that the evidence by the IAEA Board of Governors was not built on conclusive evidence and its conclusions were formulated as “likely probability” only. It added that the Board of Governors did not adopt the decision by consensus. It stated that

Syria agreed on a Plan of Action with the IAEA but the US “pressured the IAEA not to implement” the Plan.

*Assessments of the Third Preparatory Committee (Prep-Com)*

- Russia stated that the main conclusion from this Prep-Com is that nobody disputes the viability of the NPT as one of the foundations of the modern system of international security. It noted that the NPT will remain an example of effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy and a “shining example” of positive cooperation between states parties. It reminded states that there is no alternative.
- Many delegations, including Russia, Sweden, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Philippines, and the New Agenda Coalition (NAC) welcomed the generally constructive tone of the Prep-Com’s discussions and see this as a cause for optimism for the 2020 Review Conference (RevCon).
- Russia observed that some states continue to undermine the functioning of the Treaty, including with respect to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty’s (CTBT) entry into force, the creation of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (WMDFZ), and the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).
- Switzerland observed that convergence emerged on three points: the NPT is essential for global security; the outcomes of past RevCons are fundamental and new measures are required to take those forward; and equal attention to all three pillars will be an important element going forward.
- The New Agenda Coalition (NAC) noted that “a big step” was taken in the right direction.
- Many delegations, including Sweden, the European Union (EU), Argentina, and Japan welcomed the adoption of all procedural matters, including the election of the president for the 2020 RevCon.
- Australia commented on the Reflections of the Chair of the 2019 session of the Preparatory Committee, as contained in document NPT/CONF.2020/PC.III/14, and called them “honest, genuine, and forward looking.”

*Way forward*

- Some states, including the US, the EU, and Mexico welcomed Ambassador Grossi of Argentina as the President-designate for the 2020 RevCon.
- Ambassador Grossi of Argentina announced his intention to hold consultations with a broad range



*News in brief, continued*

of stakeholders in all regions of the world, including gender considerations. He said he will invite representatives from nuclear operators and regulators, industry, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, and the younger generation. He also observed the shared conviction that a failure next year is "in nobody's interest", and that "nobody will benefit from a challenged and weakened NPT."

- The US noted that the Chair's working paper, that contains the Chair's recommendations to the RevCon, cannot serve as basis for negotiations. Cuba and South Africa said that the Chair's working paper should serve as a starting point for the 2020 RevCon.
- Syria said that the RevCon must agree on practical and specific measures to create a WMDFZ in the Middle East.
- Japan outlined areas where further discussion is needed, including advancing practical and pragmatic measures, such as the entry into force of the CTBT, the commencement of negotiations of the Fissile Material Cut Off Treaty (FMCT), strengthening verification and transparency measures; strengthening diversity and gender perspectives, and nuclear disarmament education; ensuring advancement on a WMDFZ in the Middle East; and strengthening IAEA safeguards.
- Japan encouraged high-level participation at the 2020 RevCon.
- Iran said that implementation of the first pillar is a chronic failure and analogous to a heart disease which requires immediate attention. If the NPT's heart fails, the second pillar will also collapse completely.
- Sweden and the Philippines said that commitments of the 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences must be implemented.
- Sweden said in light of the current security environment, it makes the shared responsibility of the NPT even more urgent.
- ASEAN called on all member states, in particular nuclear-armed states, to enhance cooperation, and to ensure responsible and collective action. It reminded of the common goal to see humanity thrive, free from fear, animosity, and devastation caused by nuclear weapons.
- The Philippines said that it is crucial to build trust and confidence now.
- Cuba urged to "to move above and beyond" to truly achieve recommendations, and called for the adoption of a timetable with specific actions geared

towards complete the elimination of nuclear weapons, and to prevent further postponement of nuclear disarmament.

- The Philippines reiterated that the proposals on working methods "merit considerations," as there is a need for innovation to keep the NPT process robust and effective.
- Cuba urged states to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) as effective way to work towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons.
- South Africa said that it firmly believed in the NPT, which is why it agreed to its indefinite extension in 1995. It observed that the NPT's extension "places an enormous responsibility" on all of us to strive for legitimacy of the Treaty and to validate the spirit with which it was extended.
- Mexico stated that the 2020 RevCon has to review the Treaty's implementation and functioning based on factual events, and that there is not much space for opinion or will.

*Other*

- The vast majority of states parties that took the floor thanked the Chair for his transparent and inclusive manner of conducting the Third NPT PrepCom. The US thanked the Netherlands and Poland for their "out-standing work" as Chairs of the previous PrepComs.
- Russia and Syria criticised the nuclear-weapon sharing arrangement amongst some states parties and called this a violation of the NPT. The US argued that nuclear-sharing arrangements were taken into account during negotiations of the Treaty, and called on Russia to "get over it and move on."
- Russia accused the US of violating its fundamental organisational obligations under the United Nations (UN) to ensure the assurance of visas for all representatives of official delegations to participate at the UN in New York. It informed that some Russian diplomats were not able to participate in this meeting. The US said that the NPT PrepCom isn't the right forum to address this issue, and that it should be raised with the UN Host Country Committee.
- Iran said meaningless notions of various approaches to nuclear disarmament, such as the step-by-step or the "CEND" approach only have one purpose: they are "a delay tactic". It said that the US is a "bully" and in non-compliance with its article VI obligations, now investing three trillion dollars in its nuclear arsenal. •







## Mayors for Peace

### **Secretariat**

C/O Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, 1-5 Nakajima-cho, Naka-ku, Hiroshima 730-0811 Japan  
 Phone: +81-82-242-7821 Fax: +81-82-242-7452 E-mail: [mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp](mailto:mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp)  
 URL: <http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/index.html>

## **Mayors for Peace Joint Appeal for Common Ground on the NPT**

On behalf of Mayors for Peace

Kazumi Matsui, President of Mayors for Peace and Mayor of Hiroshima  
 Tomihisa Taue, Vice President of Mayors for Peace and Mayor of Nagasaki  
 T.M. Franklin Cownie, Vice President of Mayors for Peace and Mayor of Des Moines, Iowa  
 May 10, 2019

On 1 May 2019, we—along with representatives from several other non-governmental organizations—addressed the delegations participating in an international conference reviewing the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Today, we offer this joint appeal in anticipation of the treaty's Review Conference next year at the United Nations.

We view the NPT as one of the most important treaties of the post-World War II era. With a membership just short of the United Nations Charter, this treaty embodies a near-global consensus on the basic proposition that international peace and security would be strengthened in a world free from the existence or proliferation of nuclear weapons. We recognize the NPT as the only multilateral instrument binding the recognized nuclear-weapon states to pursue negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament.

In their preparations for the historic NPT Review Conference in 2020—to be held on the treaty's fiftieth anniversary—we appeal to all delegations to focus their deliberations on expanding their common ground on the fundamental objects and purposes of this treaty. The future success of the NPT will depend heavily upon diplomatic bridge building among delegations, reinforced by a common commitment to ensure the effective implementation and achievement of the treaty's principal goals.

We understand that parties to complex multilateral treaties often disagree over such matters as degrees of compliance, appropriate methods for achieving treaty goals, the equity of various treaty commitments, and the never-ending competition from narrow national interests and short-term priorities.

We appeal to all delegations not to permit such divisions from eroding the great common ground upon which all the states parties stand with respect to this treaty. We urge them to work to expand this common ground by engaging in earnest dialogue that transcends differences and to agree on innovative solutions to advance concrete nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures. We view the global interest embodied in the NPT as in the national interests of all countries and all peoples worldwide.

Recalling the inspirational words of the Einstein-Russell Manifesto in 1955: “We appeal as human beings to human beings: Remember your humanity, and forget the rest.” This is precisely the message that the *hibakusha*—the survivors of the tragic atomic bombings—most humbly wish to extend to the world and to future generations. And we wish to convey their wishes today in this joint appeal and encourage all delegations to make the 2020 NPT Review Conference a success through bold initiatives to turn the confrontational security environment into one of cooperative security.



## NPT NEWS IN REVIEW



© Tim Wright