

NPT NEWS IN REVIEW

Civil society perspectives on the
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Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)
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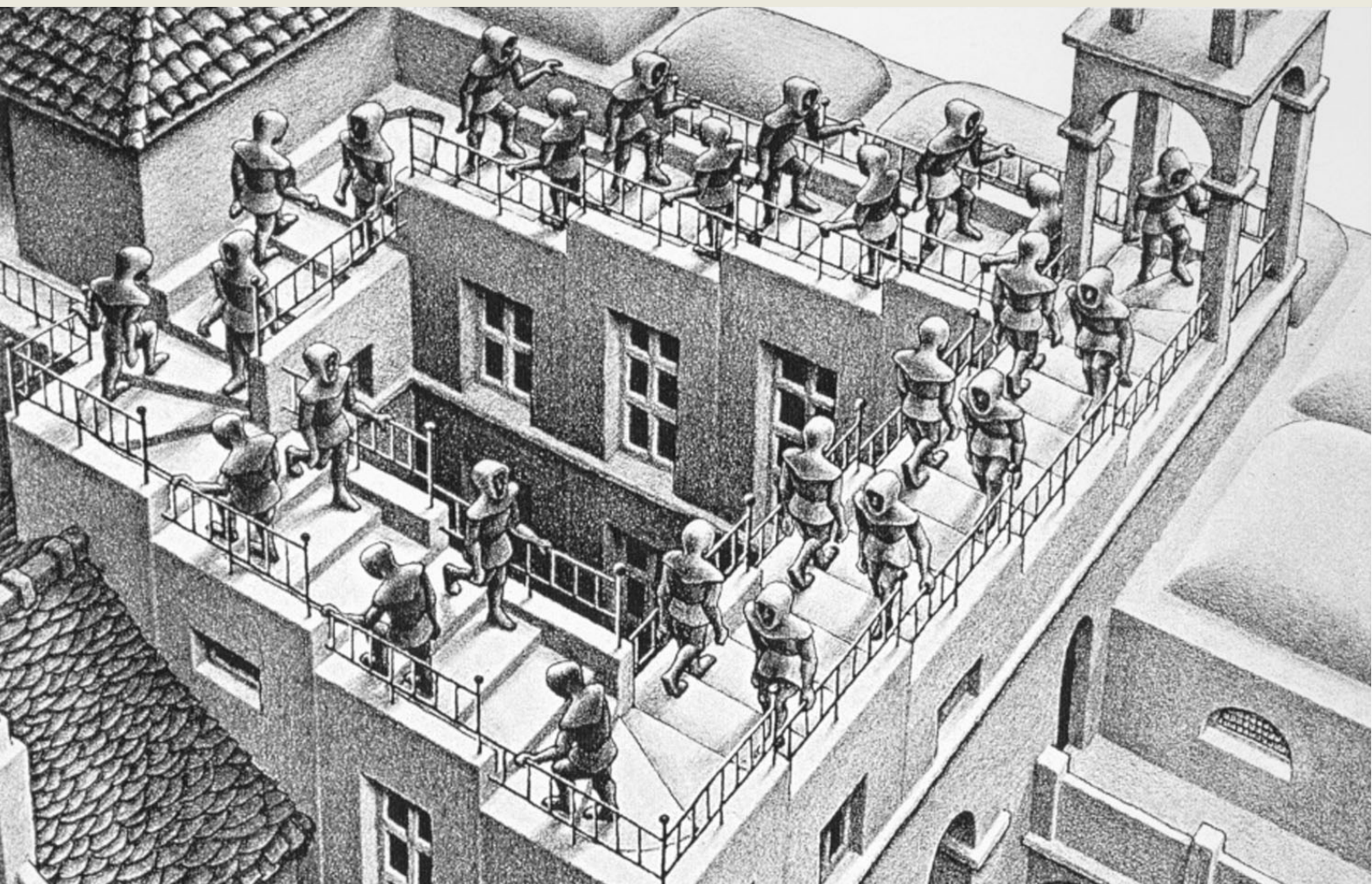


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WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL
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The Monstrous Game of Nuclear Annihilation

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

Late on Friday, 26 August 2022, the Russian delegation blocked the adoption of the **conclusions and recommendations** of the Tenth NPT Review Conference **final document**. It gave many explanations for this choice, number one among them that it believed other states, opposed to its war against Ukraine, had taken the Review Conference “politically hostage”. It accused those states of ensuring their priorities and perspectives were reflected in the outcome while working to ensure that the views of their opponents were not reflected.

This is not entirely wrong. The Review Conference was “taken hostage”. But Russia was not a victim of this behaviour—it was one of the perpetrators, along with the other nuclear-armed states and their nuclear-supportive allies. Similarly, the accusations by some delegations that that Russia was solely to blame for the failure of this Conference to reach consensus on an outcome does not hold up to the reality of the past month—or the past twelve years, since the NPT’s states parties last agreed on substantive commitments in 2010. The problem lies not with one state or group of states but with all the governments that prioritise their perception of power through violence over collective peace and well-being. These states are all collectively putting the planet in grave peril—and it’s up to the rest of the world to stop them.

Friday night fights

Reportedly, Russia’s key objections to the final document were the references to the Zaporizhzya nuclear power plant. While civil society was not allowed into the negotiations over the draft documents this past week, we know from previous open meetings that Russia wanted Ukraine to be named as the perpetrator of these attacks. In the drafts, no one is named, not even Russia, but given its repeated comments that the draft outcome does not reflect reality, this was likely still one of its concerns. Also possible is that it wanted to remove the reference to Ukraine’s

“internationally recognized borders” mentioned in paragraph 187.95, and/or the reference that states parties might be warranted to take “appropriate action” under the UN Charter in paragraph 100. In its remarks to the final plenary, the Russian delegation indicated that it had amendments it wanted to make to five paragraphs but did not specify at that time what those were. (For more details on the nature of the references to Zaporizhzya in the draft final document, see the article “Overview of the Unadopted Outcome” in this edition.)

While Russia accused the “Western states” of politicising the Review Conference, many of these states—including the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States—accused Russia of being solely responsible for the failure of the Review Conference to achieve consensus on its outcome document. These delegations expressed regret that a state party would wage an illegal war against and occupy another country in contravention of international law and to the detriment of international peace and security. They did not, however, offer any reflection upon their own past such behaviour, including the illegal war of aggression against Iraq.

The context of war

During the closing remarks on Friday, France delivered a **joint statement** on behalf of 55 states and the European Union that rightfully condemned Russia’s war against Ukraine and deplored its nuclear threats and its seizure of Ukraine’s nuclear power plants. Without a doubt, Russia’s illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, its threats to use nuclear weapons, its decision to raise the alert status of its nuclear forces, and its occupation of Ukrainian nuclear power plants run counter to its NPT obligations and gravely impacted the credibility of the Treaty and the work of this Review Conference.

But Russia was not alone in derailing this Conference. Despite all the divergences among

those playing at geopolitics, Russia was fully aligned with the other NPT nuclear-armed states in actively preventing any meaningful commitment to advance nuclear disarmament, stop nuclear threats, or reduce nuclear risks from being included in the outcome document. While the five NPT nuclear-armed states may not be a monolith, they can certainly agree on a few things: they want to continue to possess and modernise their nuclear arsenals, they do not believe they are legally obligated to eliminate their nuclear weapons, and they really, really hate the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

Furthermore, the nuclear allies, including those of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Australia, Japan, and the Republic of Korea, to varying degrees support the perpetuation of nuclear weapons and the dangerous doctrine of nuclear deterrence. They made this very clear by refusing to allow even an acknowledgement that some states that include nuclear weapons in the security doctrines have a responsibility to reduce the roles of those weapons.

A disappointing document

Because of the dissatisfaction expressed by many states throughout the Conference with the failures on nuclear disarmament, Russia asserted that other states also opposed the outcome document. But of all the other delegations that took the floor on Friday night, only Syria was supportive of Russia's position. Iran expressed its dissatisfaction with multiple aspects of the text and the drafting process, notably in relation to the Middle East, but did not say whether or not it would have accepted it. The majority of delegations that spoke—including those of the Non-Aligned Movement, the New Agenda Coalition, and states parties of the TPNW—said they would have accepted the final document. They expressed profound regret at the Conference's failure—not because they thought the document was good in itself, but for the loss of multilateral agreement at a time of grave nuclear risk and rhetoric.

"In truth, the document was well below our expectations, falling short on concrete measures to advance us toward nuclear disarmament," said

Costa Rica. "However, we felt it was necessary for the NPT states parties to meet the current moment, with the nuclear risks higher than they have been in decades, and together reaffirm our determination to uphold international law in pursuit of our common goal."

For everyone except the nuclear-armed states and their allies, the final draft document was a profound disappointment. Throughout the Conference, said **Malaysia**, it became "evidently clear that there is absolutely no desire on the part of a handful of States Parties to fulfill their disarmament obligations." The **New Agenda Coalition** noted its concern with the "fractious relationship" among the nuclear-armed states, warning that their "policies, pronouncements, and actions are retrogressing from the goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons."

This is not to say there were no positive elements in the draft document. The best advances were perhaps in relation to gender, diversity, and inclusion. While not going nearly far enough to effect meaningful change, the recognition that work is needed in relation to gender diversity and perspectives, education and empowerment, and civil society inclusion is new for the NPT review process. In addition, the references to the humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons were significantly improved from past NPT draft documents from the last two review cycles, and this should be taken forward. There are other elements where states came together constructively to find agreement, some of which are outlined in the next article in this edition. But the positive parts of the draft document do not make up for the abject failure to implement the Treaty's core obligations on nuclear disarmament. Instead, they only risk providing cover for the continued implementation failures.

Monster mash

In this sense, the unadopted outcome of this Tenth NPT Review Conference is perhaps best described as Frankenstein's Creature, crafted from the body parts of cadavers and reanimated through an unknown process that transforms inanimate matter into (somewhat) living tissue.

The refusal of the nuclear-armed states to implement the NPT's disarmament provisions are arguably turning the treaty itself into a zombie, an undead thing that keeps on moving, deteriorating further and further as the nuclear-armed states fail to implement it, putting everyone in constant danger. One could also argue that it is more like Gollum's precious ring, which extended his life far beyond natural limits and twisted his body and mind until he "loved and hated [the Ring], as he loved and hated himself"?

Whichever monster metaphor you prefer, and regardless of the fact that it was not adopted, the draft outcome of this Review Conference is a dangerous disappointment.

It was not an agreement that would have saved humanity. It was not a reflection of the world we live in. It contained zero ambition to address the "grave concerns" expressed repeatedly in the document—about the catastrophic impacts of nuclear weapons, about the lack of tangible progress on nuclear disarmament, about ongoing arms racing and nuclear threat-making.

The final draft contained 59 reaffirmations. To what end? How long do we keep reaffirming things that the nuclear-armed states and their nuclear-supportive allies seem intent to violate year after year after year? Is that the point of a five-year review cycle: to reaffirm commitments from five, ten, twenty years ago? If each Review Conference is simply a reaffirmation of the last one, what is the point of the exercise? Do we just reaffirm reaffirmations each time, looping ourselves into a meaningless spiral?

And what are the actions, the commitments, that are made in this document in relation to nuclear disarmament? They are for dialogue. They are agreements to talk about further talks. This does not count as "every effort," as stipulated in Article VI. This does not count as action.

What does maintaining multilateralism require?

South Africa warned that the failure of this Review Conference, following the failure in 2015, is a stark reminder of the length that the nuclear-

armed states are willing to go to continue to possess nuclear weapons. It accused these states and their nuclear-supportive allies of putting their own selfish interests above the world's collective well-being. "Reliance on nuclear deterrence at the end of the day means the readiness to inflict global catastrophic consequences also on states and populations that have little to do with and are not responsible for the geopolitical tensions," said **Austria**. "This is unacceptable."

Even if this document had been adopted by consensus, but what does consensus mean in this context? It means the vast majority of governments in the world have been bullied into submission by the nuclear-armed states and their allies once again. Most countries put multilateral interests above their own and were clearly willing to do so again here. But at what point does going along for the sake of signalling "the collective cooperation so sorely needed at this time of global uncertainty and insecurity," as **New Zealand** put it, become no longer tenable? At what point do states parties need to change the way the NPT review process is conducted, or how non-compliance with its disarmament provisions is addressed? As RCW has written about in relation to this and many other disarmament forums, interpreting consensus as unanimity is dangerous for the integrity and effectiveness of a treaty or process.

Fifty-two years after the NPT's adoption nuclear weapons still exist, and the nuclear-armed states are clearly upgrading and modernising them with the intention of indefinite possession. This situation cannot persist; otherwise, are we really protecting the multilateral spirit, collective security, or international law—or are we just protecting the nuclear-armed states, double standards, and global inequalities?

Finding the light and working for change

The failure of the 2015 NPT Review Conference helped provide momentum for the negotiation in 2017 of the TPNW. The 122 states voting for its adoption, and the increasing number of its states parties and signatories now, signalled their intention to take matters into their own hands.

Instead of being supplicants before the nuclear-armed states, those that have already rejected the myths and dangers of nuclear deterrence created new law to promote a nuclear free world.

Just a few months ago, they adopted a strong **declaration** and ambitious **action plan**—which France and others would not even allowed to be mentioned in the NPT Review Conference final document. This is where the work clearly lies over the next few years. This is where it is possible to build a world free of nuclear weapons and address past and ongoing nuclear harm.

In a sense, said Austria, these past four weeks have been a validation of and promotion for the TPNW. Austria noted that its delegations and those of other TPNW supporters tried hard at this Review Conference to achieve progress in the NPT, “but we see once again how little is possible. The status quo is simply not an option. We cannot prepare for nuclear catastrophe. What we cannot prepare for we must prevent. We cannot afford to wait.” In this context, Austria called “on all states who want to achieve actual progress on Article VI of the NPT to join the TPNW.”

One of the lessons learned from the process to ban nuclear weapons is that we cannot look to leadership from the nuclear-armed states to make the world safer. They will in fact do whatever they can to prevent this. Their fierce and relentless

objections to the prohibition of a weapon of mass destruction shows exactly what orientation these states have towards peace, security, and care; appealing to their “better nature” is not leading to any real progress. Leadership, and courage, will come from elsewhere—as it already has.

States parties and signatories to the TPNW also issued a **joint statement** on Friday night. They reiterated their support for the NPT and its full implementation, but they also expressed dismay that the risks of nuclear weapon use have been used at this Conference as a reason to work “against the urgently needed progress on nuclear disarmament, and to uphold an approach to security based on the fallacy of nuclear deterrence.” The TPNW states explained that while they have no illusions about the challenges and obstacles, they seek to move ahead with optimism and resolve:

In the face of the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons and in the interest of the very survival of humanity, we cannot do otherwise. We will take every path that is open to us, and work persistently to open those that are still closed. We will not rest until the last state has joined the TPNW, the last warhead has been irreversibly dismantled and destroyed and nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated from the Earth.

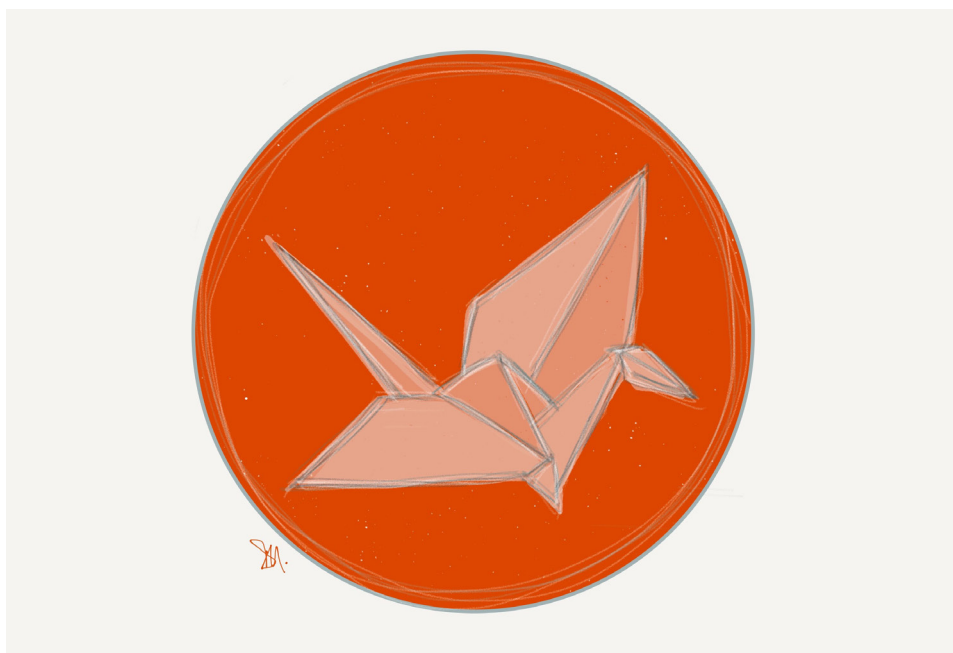


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Overview of the Unadopted Outcome

Ray Acheson | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

The following is a short, not comprehensive review of the **draft final document**, which was not adopted by the Review Conference. This report focuses on issues of key concern, including nuclear disarmament, nuclear threats, humanitarian impacts, attacks on nuclear power facilities, naval nuclear propulsion, and gender, diversity, and inclusion, among others.

Nuclear disarmament weak sauce

The review portion of the text reaffirms the obligations under Article VI, the commitments made in 1995, 2000, and 2010, and the nuclear-armed states unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear weapons. However, this is not matched by any action to achieve these goals in the “forward-looking” part of the draft final document. There are no timelines or benchmarks for progress. Despite all of the various points of “grave concern” with the present situation expressed throughout the text, there is no sense of urgency to achieve the one thing that could actually help improve the situation: nuclear disarmament.

The latest versions add conditionalities to disarmament, referencing the language from former US President Obama’s 2008 Prague speech about the “peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” (this language appears twice in the text, in para 103 of the review and para 4 of the forward-looking part) and expressing concern with the “deteriorated international security environment and its impact on the implementation and goals of the Treaty.” The Rev.2 report recommits states parties to fully implement Article VI—which is followed by a conditioning paragraph committing states parties to “the promotion of international stability, peace and security, and to seeking increased and undiminished security for all.” This is echoed in the review portion of the document, where, in para 110, it “recalls that significant steps by all the nuclear-weapon States leading to nuclear disarmament should promote international

stability, peace and security, and be based on the principle of increased and undiminished security for all consistent with Action 5 of the conclusions and recommendations for follow-on actions adopted by the 2010 Review Conference.”

The document commits nuclear-armed states to make “every effort” to “further decrease the global stockpile of nuclear weapons” including through “immediate reductions,” though the already incredibly weak and nebulous commitment to “commence a dialogue to establish a multilateral nuclear arms control framework with the goal of achieving reductions in the overall size of nuclear arsenals” has been deleted.

The paragraph stating that states parties “recall their obligation to pursue the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the highest disarmament priority and express deep concern about the absence of tangible progress since the ninth Review Conference in 2015” has likewise been deleted. (The line about lack of tangible progress has been included in the review part but is in relation to further reductions and the implementation of disarmament commitments.) The reference to the statement by the leaders of the NPT nuclear-armed states reaffirming that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought has also been removed. The review portion still references the statement, but does not mention this line specifically.

The report is still incredibly weak on nuclear weapon modernisation—it recognises that non-nuclear armed states have concerns about the qualitative and quantitative improvements of nuclear weapons and commits the nuclear-armed states to “engage in dialogue” with them to address these concerns during the next review cycle. It does not in any way commit them to stopping these programmes. Furthermore, the reference to the International Court of Justice advisory opinion has been gutted of any mention of its ruling on the obligation to achieve nuclear disarmament. And to top it all off, the factual

reference to the adoption of the declaration and action plan by the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) contained in an earlier version has been deleted.

Threatening nuclear threats

The text addresses the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons in a few places, but there is no explicit condemnation of such threats.

In two redundant paragraphs, the review portion of the text deals with threats or use of force in a general way, not specifically related to nuclear weapons. In para 128, it “expresses concern at the threat or use of force in contravention of the Charter of the United Nations against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or acting in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.” In para 156, it “reaffirms that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.”

In relation to nuclear weapon use, the review part “acknowledges the devastation that would be visited upon all humankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples.” It also “expresses deep concern that the threat of nuclear weapons use today is higher than at any time since the heights of the Cold War and at the deteriorated international security environment.”

However, the language in the forward-looking part has been weakened in several ways. For example, the original consolidated draft, using language from Main Committee I and Subsidiary Body 1, recalled “that it has been 77 years since the use of nuclear weapons and affirm that nuclear weapons must never be used again.” Instead, the final version says, “Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, States parties commit to making every effort to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again.”

Later on, in the forward-looking part, in para 187.37, the document says that in view of concerns about the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons (HINW) and “the increased risk of nuclear weapons being used as a result of, inter alia, the current deteriorated security environment, States parties recognize that they have a shared interest in averting a nuclear war and underscore that nuclear-weapons States have the primary responsibility in preventing such a war.” In this context, the document commits the nuclear-armed states “to refrain from any inflammatory rhetoric concerning the use of nuclear weapons.” This is an attempt, which began at the beginning of this Conference, to make some kind of hierarchy of nuclear threats, in which some threats are apparently more threatening than others. This paragraph goes on to set out nuclear risk reduction measures, which have become the main output from this Review Conference, clearly as an attempt to supplant timebound and meaningful commitments to nuclear disarmament. (Even still, these measures have also been worn down throughout the various negotiations; the final document contains only a few measures.)

The most tangible commitment not to use nuclear weapons comes in the form of a commitment by nuclear-armed states “not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the Treaty under any circumstances,” which in the final version has been weakened considerably in para 187.32(b) to “not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States Parties to the Treaty consistent with their respective national statements.” This means whatever unilateral statement each nuclear-armed state has made will stand—until they decide, as Russia did with Ukraine, that it no longer stands.

The outcome does, despite Russia’s objections, still have the reference to the Budapest Memorandum in para 144, through which Russia gave Ukraine security assurances in 1994. However, the reference does not—nor did any of the drafts—indicate that Russia had violated this Memorandum, only that the Conference reaffirms its importance.

Raising humanitarian impacts

There are still multiple references to the HINW in the review and forward-looking parts of the text, including expressions of deep concern at the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and with the immediate, mid- and long-term impacts of nuclear detonations, recognition of the HINW conferences, and reaffirmation that all states must comply with international law, including international humanitarian law.

A welcome new para, 125, “welcomes the increased attention in the last review cycle on assistance to the people and communities affected by nuclear weapons use and testing and environmental remediation following nuclear use and testing and calls on States

parties to engage with such efforts to address nuclear harm.” This is an important recognition that some NPT states parties that are not yet party to the TPNW have expressed interest in supporting efforts to implement the relevant provisions of the TPNW. However, this formulation calls on states parties to take this up, it does not commit them to do so.

Furthermore, where the text used to say that the HINW “must underpin” all efforts and approaches to nuclear disarmament, it now says these impacts “ought to underpin” such efforts. That said, it’s important that an increasing number of states are clearly supportive of a broad HINW approach to nuclear disarmament, as demonstrated by the 147 states parties that aligned with the **joint humanitarian statement** delivered by Costa Rica on 22 August and by the many interventions in support of these paragraphs throughout multiple drafts.

Coming out of **Main Committee III’s work**, one para in the forward-looking part of the text, para 187.93, “reiterates the appeal of previous Review Conferences to all Governments and international organizations that have expertise in the field of clean-up and disposal of radioactive contaminants to consider giving appropriate assistance, as may be requested, for remedial purposes in affected areas, noting the efforts that have been made to date in this regard.” While this

language was developed in relation to nuclear energy, its provisions could and should be applied to all radioactive contamination resulting from the production and use of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy, including through uranium mining, fuel processing, radioactive waste disposal, and other aspects of the nuclear fuel chain.

No propulsion for naval nuclear propulsion

The already limited reference to naval nuclear propulsion (NNP) has been weakened further in the final document. This was introduced as a topic this year because of the new Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) partnership and its transfer of nuclear-powered submarines and highly enriched uranium from two nuclear-armed state to a non-nuclear armed state. Many delegations expressed concern with the non-proliferation and security implications of this arrangement, including through working papers and concrete recommendations, but the AUKUS partners and some of their nuclear-supportive allies, as well as states like Brazil with such programmes, tried to shut down discussions and references to the topic.

An earlier draft of the final document spelled out some of the concerns raised by NPT states parties in paragraph 36, noting that this topic “has generated interest among States parties to the Treaty regarding, inter alia, verification arrangements to ensure that such nuclear material will not be diverted to nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.” In this regard, the draft said that the states concerned “should continue to engage with the IAEA on the issue, in line with the relevant safeguards agreements, and that the IAEA Director General should report relevant developments to the wider IAEA membership in accordance with established practices of the IAEA’s policy-making organs.”

The Rev.2 draft has been truncated substantially, now just noting “that the topic of naval nuclear propulsion is of interest to the States Parties to the Treaty” and recognising “the importance of transparent and open dialogue on this topic.” It also notes that non-nuclear armed states “that pursue naval nuclear propulsion should engage with the IAEA in an open and transparent

manner.” There is not any reflection of the calls from China to establish committees or groups to specifically consider this issue either in the NPT review cycle or at the IAEA.

The dangers at Zaporizhzya

After reportedly intense deliberations during the final week, the final document retained the paras on the Zaporizhzya nuclear power plant. Para 34 “expresses its grave concern for the military activities conducted near or at nuclear power plants and other facilities or locations subject to safeguards under Ukraine’s comprehensive safeguards agreement, in particular the Zaporizhzya nuclear power plant, as well as the loss of control by the competent Ukrainian authorities over such locations as a result of those military activities, and their profound negative impact on safety, security, including physical protection of nuclear material, and safeguards.” The para also “recognizes that the loss of control over nuclear facilities and other locations prevents the competent Ukrainian authorities and the IAEA from ensuring that safeguards activities can be implemented effectively and safely.”

In this context, para 35 “supports the efforts of the Director General of the IAEA to seek access to enable the IAEA to undertake urgent safeguards activities to verify the status of the reactors and inventories of nuclear material in armed conflict areas, including at the Zaporizhzya nuclear power plant and other locations in Ukraine, and to ensure the non-diversion of nuclear material from peaceful activities at those locations.” Para 99 “expresses grave concern with the safety and security of Ukraine’s nuclear facilities and materials, in particular the Zaporizhzya Nuclear Power Plant, and expresses appreciation for the IAEA’s and its Director General’s efforts to address this concern.”

In the forward-looking part, para 187.50 “stresses the paramount importance of ensuring control by Ukraine’s competent authorities of nuclear facilities and other locations subject to IAEA safeguards located in armed conflict areas, such as the Zaporizhzya nuclear power plant and other facilities and locations within Ukraine, and of providing access to the IAEA in order to

implement safeguards activities effectively and safely for the purpose of ensuring that nuclear material is not diverted to nuclear weapons or nuclear explosive devices.” In para 187.95, it “encourages States parties to support the IAEA Director General’s efforts to restore the safety and security of Ukraine’s nuclear facilities and materials, within its internationally recognized borders.”

Without explicitly mentioning Zaporizhzya, the review part of final document also, in para 98, “reminds all States Parties of the importance of nuclear safety and security regarding peaceful nuclear facilities and materials in all circumstances, including in armed conflict zones, and of the IAEA Director General’s ‘Seven Indispensable Pillars on Nuclear Safety and Security’ derived from IAEA safety standards and nuclear security guidance.” In para 100, it further “expresses grave concern at attacks or threats of attack on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, which jeopardize nuclear safety and nuclear security. The Conference also considers that attacks or threats of attack on nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes have dangerous political, economic, human health, and environmental, implications and raise serious concerns regarding the application of international law, which could warrant appropriate action in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.” The forward looking part, in para 187.94, calls upon states parties to abide by the IAEA General Conference decision on the “Prohibition of armed attack or threat of armed attack against nuclear installations, during operation or under construction” (GC(53)/DEC/13).

None of these paragraphs mention Russia as responsible for the current situation in Ukraine, as had been suggested by several states during the Main Committee II deliberations on this topic. None indicate who the perpetrator of the attacks has been—Russia wanted Ukraine to be named. In its remarks to the final plenary, the Russian delegation indicated that it had amendments it wanted to make to five paragraphs but did not specify at that time what those were.

Gender, diversity, and inclusion

After all the fights about diversity—including a push by a few states to include a reference to the participation of “all genders,” the final document unsurprisingly retains a binary approach to gender. That said, going from zero references to women or gender in 2010 to multiple paragraphs in 2022 marks forward movement. However, it’s important to hold states to account to advance diversity and inclusion without allowing any other states to use this progress as a cover for not taking action on nuclear disarmament.

The review portion of the text calls for the “full, equal and meaningful participation of women in non-proliferation and safeguards” in para 37, welcomes efforts of states parties to “attain full and meaningful participation of women” in the field of nuclear energy in para 82, and “recognises the importance of and commit to ensure the equal, full and meaningful participation and leadership of both women and men in the NPT’s implementation and review” in para 154.

Para 154 also “recalls the working papers, statements, joint statements and side events on gender in the context of the tenth review cycle,” notes “States Parties’ call for the further integration of a gender perspective in all aspects related to implementation of the Treaty,” and “calls on States Parties to further strengthen work in this regard in the next review cycle.”

Para 183 “endorses the fundamental importance of promoting the equal, full and effective participation and leadership of women in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and welcomes the gender-balance in the bureau of the Tenth Review Conference.”

In the forward-looking part, para 187.41 recognises “the importance of, and commit to ensure the equal, full and effective participation and leadership of both women and men in the NPT implementation and review and to further integrate a gender perspective in all aspects of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation decision-making processes.” In addition, 187.46 “calls upon States parties to take concrete

steps to facilitate the full, equal and meaningful participation of women in non-proliferation and safeguards and to foster an inclusive workforce of both men and women who contribute to and drive global scientific and technological innovation.” 187.74 specifically “calls upon all States parties to support efforts to ensure the full, equal and meaningful participation of women and to promote an inclusive workforce in the areas of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including by supporting initiatives such as the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme aimed at increasing the number of women in the nuclear field.”

More broadly, in para 187.97, the document “encourages States parties to ensure full, equal and meaningful participation of women in decision-making in the review process of the Treaty including in the bureau, in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), and to actively support the participation of women in their delegations including through support for sponsorship programmes,” and in 187.98 it “requests the Secretariat to collect, track and publish data on participation of women.”

On civil society participation, the review part, in para 151, “notes the value of positive interaction with civil society, research centres, academia and affected communities during the review cycle and greater engagement with non-governmental organizations in the context of the review process of the Treaty, as well as in the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.” It also, in para 155, “calls on States Parties to commit to promote and enhance the participation of civil society, including research centres and academia, in processes related to nuclear disarmament and in raising public awareness on the urgency and importance of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.” In 183, it further “notes the role of civil society, including research centres and academia, in nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy decision-making processes and in raising public awareness.” Meanwhile, paras 152 and 153 talk about the importance of education and youth empowerment.

In the forward-looking part, para 187.43 commits states parties “to promote and enhance the participation of civil society, including affected communities, research centres and academia, in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation processes and in raising public awareness on the urgency and importance of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.” In addition, 187.42 commits states parties “to empower and enable youth to participate in formal and informal initiatives and in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation decision-making processes.”

In the paragraphs focusing on a strengthened NPT review process, the document recognises in para 180 that there is scope to improve effectiveness, transparency, inclusivity, efficiency, and responsiveness of the review process. Given that civil society was locked out of the final days of negotiations, not given access to official documentation, and is prevented from participating in discussions the way it is possible in other UN disarmament fora, there is indeed much scope for improvement that should be taken up actively before the next Preparatory Committee.

Other elements

The reference to a moratorium on the production of fissile materials has been deleted.

The language on the Middle East nuclear weapon free zone is bland, reaffirming past commitments and acknowledging that the UN General Assembly has a process going on related to this issue, but not containing any new commitments for NPT states parties. As outlined in the report from the final plenary, this was met with strong disappointment by many states both within the region and beyond. Some states reminded the Conference about the connection between the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and the NPT’s indefinite extension. This text came out of Subsidiary Body 2 and was not openly discussed in the Main Committee II.

The document does not call on nuclear-armed states to remove their reservations or interpretative declarations made on existing nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) treaty

protocols, as many NWFZ states parties urged. It encourages nuclear-armed states to “review” such reservations and to engage in dialogue with members of the relevant zones, in para 162. This had been an important call from non-nuclear armed states, particularly regional groupings, throughout the Conference, to which nuclear-armed states responded consistently to say that they do not view such interpretative statements as being reservations.

In relation to small quantities protocols, the document doesn’t call for states parties to rescind them, it just says they are difficult to use and encourages the IAEA to assist states that request it with help rescinding or amending these protocols. Similarly, the language on the Additional Protocol (AP) keeps the status quo, which is to be expected given that the AP is voluntary. It does encourage all states parties to conclude and bring into force APs as soon as possible and reiterates previous language that the AP “should be universally applied once the complete elimination of nuclear weapons has been achieved.”

The language on the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) retained the condemnations and forceful language, while also calling for the resolution of the issue through negotiations and diplomacy for a “peaceful and comprehensive solution,” along with the reduction of tensions and resumption of dialogue. No other regional issues are specifically mentioned except for a cryptic reference to “concern about other regions in Asia where nuclear stockpiles pose challenges” in para 178.

There are multiple references to non-compliance, however, the majority relate to non-proliferation commitments rather than disarmament obligations.

the VOW from HIROSHIMA

*"Each person had a name. Each person was loved by someone.
Let us ensure that their deaths were not in vain"*

-Setsuko Thurlow



NEW YORK CITY Screening of THE VOW FROM HIROSHIMA

A FILM BY SUSAN STRICKLER

WHEN

September 19, 7PM

Door opens at 6:30 p.m.

WHERE

Scandinavia House

58 Park Avenue @38th Street, New York, NY 10016

TICKETS

Tickets are available on
www.eventbrite.com

Event Title:
The Vow from Hiroshima NYC screening
General: \$15.00 Senior(60+): \$12.00



SCAN the QR code
for ticket purchase

THE VOW FROM HIROSHIMA is an intimate portrait of Setsuko Thurlow, a passionate survivor of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Setsuko was miraculously pulled out of the fiery ruins but was unable to save her 27 classmates who were burned to death. That experience shaped her life forever, and she endeavored to keep a pledge she made to her friends - that no one should ever again experience the same horrible fate. Her moving story, from the ruins of Hiroshima to the Nobel Peace Prize, is told through the lens of her growing friendship with second-generation survivor Mitchie Takeuchi. Q & A with Susan Strickler and Mitchie Takeuchi will follow.

This event is supported by:
Youth Arts New York/Hibakusha Stories
The New York Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (NYCAN)



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Report on the Final Plenary Meeting

Allison Pytlak and Laura Varella | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On Friday, 26 August the president of the Tenth NPT Review Conference (RevCon), Ambassador Gustavo Zlauvinen of Argentina, convened the final plenary meeting of the Conference. While initially scheduled to begin at 15:00 EDT, several delays meant that the start time was pushed back by several hours until around 20:00 EDT, ending just before midnight.

The final meeting was intended to cover outstanding areas of business: adoption of the report of the Credentials Committee, presented by Iraq; and adoption of the final report of the Conference. The draft final report consisted of a **procedural section**, as well as a **substantive one**. The only decisions that had to be taken in the procedural part concerned the schedule for the next NPT review cycle and the establishment of a working group to strengthen the NPT review process. It was decided that there would not be a gap year before starting the next cycle, but rather that the first Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) would be held in Vienna in 2023, with the subsequent PrepComs taking place in 2024 in Geneva, 2025 in New York, and the Eleventh RevCon in 2026 in New York.

The substantive section of the draft final report was of course the more challenging one to adopt. The President had introduced a **second revised draft** late on Thursday, 25 August, which he said tried to account for the various inputs and reactions he had received on the earlier draft. As he explained, he did not expect delegations to “love” the document but argued that it represented his best effort to meet a broad spectrum of expectations for progressive outcomes and build upon past agreements. He said he was aware of one delegation that still had specific issues with the second revised draft as of noon on the 26th and that its proposed changes were not reflected in the document.

The President then asked NPT states parties if they were willing to adopt the document as is, and Russia requested to take the floor. In its

statement, Russia outlined that its delegation has one key objection on some paragraphs that are “blatantly political” in nature. It would not wish for these five paragraphs to be deleted, but just modified. Russia further stated that it knows other delegations have objections and issues with the draft as well. It said it is willing to work further on the draft but if other states do not have this same wish then there will be no consensus and delegations—here Russia stressed “delegations” in the plural—cannot adopt the draft as presented. Essentially, Russia sought to acknowledge its issues with the draft but not take responsibility for blocking consensus.

Therefore, the substantive report was not adopted, while its procedural aspects were. Following this, more than 50 delegations took the floor to express their views on the outcome of the RevCon. Virtually all delegations offered deep appreciation and thanks to Ambassador Zlauvinen and his team, as well as that of the UN Secretariat, with many indicating that he should not take the inability of the Conference to adopt a final report as a personal failure or reflection on his guidance and hard work.

Below is a non-exhaustive summary of statements delivering, focusing mainly on reactions to the outcome of the RevCon and views on content of the revised draft report.

Views on the outcome of the Conference

In reacting to the non-adoption of the final report, many delegations underscored that they too were not happy with the draft but saw its adoption as important in a larger context.

The European Union (EU) noted that consensus was bound to be difficult given current circumstances, and that the vitality of the NPT is more important than ever. China noted that today’s developments show that the NPT is not operating in a vacuum. The Philippines highly regretted that the conclusion of the RevCon does

not even offer a “flicker of hope” to the people that are looking to the Conference and Treaty in need of hope. It saw the RevCon as an opportunity to affirm that the NPT is on solid footing and that the spirit of multilateralism prevails. **Canada** likewise noted that the draft was certainly not perfect, but said it believed that it represented “an incremental step forward in a difficult international environment.”

Costa Rica indicated that it was prepared to join consensus on the final document because of its commitment to the Treaty, the non-proliferation regime, and the goal of a world without nuclear weapons. Lebanon spoke of the concessions that had been made to reach a conclusion that will be important for “our future and our world”. Lebanon also expressed disappointment at the outcome, recalling that the current global security context it was particularly important to rise to the challenge and find agreement. **Colombia** said it was willing to adopt the final report even if it did reflect the progress it had hoped for, because it sees a need to defend international instruments. Colombia stressed the importance of communication and dialogue. Sri Lanka made similar comments about the value of dialogue and exchange.

New Zealand noted that that irrespective of the strengths and weaknesses of the draft report, it did represent a sign of the collective cooperation so sorely needed at this time of global uncertainty and insecurity. “That all but one party to the NPT membership managed to negotiate an outcome—and come to understandings across the three pillars of the NPT—is no small achievement.”

South Africa said it had no words to express its “deep dismay” on the lack of consensus, which it did not expect to happen. It noted that “one failure is bad enough, but two failures back-to-back takes us into uncharted waters.” South Africa said this result is a stark reminder of the lengths that nuclear-armed states are willing to go to put their needs ahead of the rest of humanity. It recalled that the 1995 indefinite extension of the NPT did not give nuclear-armed and umbrella states the right to indefinite possession of nuclear weapons, concluding, “So there is work to be done in the lead up to the next review conference.”

Other delegations had sharper views about the result of the Conference and the responsibility for its inability to adopt a substantive report.

Some delegations, mainly Western countries, were clear about Russia’s role in the “failure” of the RevCon. The United States (US) said that Russia is to blame for the failure of the RevCon, and that it “threw away” the outcome document. The US said that the proposed changes from Russia on the draft were meant to shield its activities in Ukraine. It regrets this outcome and more deeply regrets Russia actions that led us here today.

The United Kingdom (UK) stated that the existing divisions in the treaty and the world are exacerbated by the war on Ukraine. It argued that Russia tries to blame everyone but itself for its actions, but while it can block the adoption of a document it cannot hide from the world’s revulsion at its actions.

Germany regretted that the conference could not agree on language that could have adequately reflected the situation faced by Ukraine. The Netherlands said that all the three pillars of the NPT have been violated by the Russian Federation and that it regretted that in this document, countries could not state the obvious. Belgium, Japan, Norway, Poland, and Sweden, among others, also regretted that Russia prevented state parties from reaching consensus on an outcome document.

France delivered a **joint statement** on behalf of 55 states parties that reiterated their strongest condemnation of the ongoing “unprovoked and unjustifiable war” of aggression against Ukraine. The statement mentions in particular Russia’s disregard for the Budapest Memorandum, and the dangerous situation facing Ukrainian nuclear facilities because of Russian forces. The statement also condemned Belarus for its complicity in Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Many of states also individually commented on Russia’s war against Ukraine. The EU condemned Russian aggression in Ukraine and said it is deeply concerned about the situation

around the Zaporizhzhya power plant, which is a result of Russian aggression. Germany said that Russia's war against Ukraine is a breach of the UN Charter and in contravention of the security assurances it gave in the Budapest Memorandum. Japan also condemned the ongoing unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine.

Sweden condemned Russia's aggression against Ukraine and expressed concern about the nuclear risks due to the military activities conducted by Russia near or at nuclear facilities, in particular the Zaporizhzhya power plant. It called on Russia to restore Ukraine's full control of the Zaporizhzhya plant and immediately and unconditionally withdraw its troops from the internationally recognized territory of Ukraine. Belgium made similar remarks.

Ireland said that the reckless actions of the Russian military forces in Ukraine, including the spectre of the threat to use nuclear weapons in conflict, have demonstrated their utter disregard for nuclear safety and security, including in their violent illegal seizure and occupation of Zaporizhzhia facility.

Austria recognised that actions by Russia have "profoundly damaged the NPT" but that beyond that, other geopolitical tensions are also impacting and paralysing practically all issues that we discussed during the past four weeks. Austria also pointed to a "dramatic trust and confidence deficit among some [nuclear-armed states]." All of these contributed to disagreement among states parties, although Austria noted that where nuclear-armed states do agree is to advance on disarmament.

Russia delivered a second, lengthier statement after the report was not adopted. Here, Russia emphasised again that no conference participants were satisfied with the draft report, which led it to believe that the document was weak in terms of content, and that with so many fundamental differences it would be wrong have expected a strong, ambitious, and forward-looking report. Russia cited several events are impacting the NPT, including the termination of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty;

development of increasingly close military and technical cooperation between nuclear-armed and non-nuclear-armed states; nuclear sharing; and the consent of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to use nuclear weapons, amongst others. It outlined three reasons why the report was not adopted: 1) the distance between the positions of states parties is too far to be overcome, and that "consensus for consensus" sake is unreasonable; 2) the unwillingness of states with opposing views to take into account the views of others and the ideological differences about how to approach the goal of disarmament; and 3) the introduction of new concepts and ideas which required more time to discuss than what was available.

In this same statement, Russia described what it saw as weaknesses in the process. Among other issues, it explained that the Conference had become a "political hostage" of states that "poisoned" the Conference with their biased statements on Ukraine. Russia said that Ukraine and its supporters bear full responsibility for the failure of the Conference and that the anti-Russian sentiment had become especially cynical over the last several days.

Syria agreed with Russia's views concerning politicisation of the RevCon.

Looking ahead

Despite their disappointment, some delegations tried to look positively toward the future and next review cycle. Egypt said that failure means states should work honestly and hard over the next cycle in order for the next RevCon to make progress in a tangible way. China observed that even though the final document was not adopted, all states parties were able to fully express their different opinions and demands, which deepens everyone's understanding and is an important practice for common security and genuine multilateralism. The closing of this RevCon marks the beginning a new review cycle, said China, and it is ready to work with others to promote the role of the NPT. The UK also stressed that one state blocking adoption of the outcome document does not negate four weeks of hard work.

Malaysia stressed that states should reflect and learn from the failure to adopt a consensual outcome document for two consecutive review conferences, a point echoed by Switzerland. “For the next review cycle, we must work in earnest to bridge the differences between States Parties, to ensure that the Treaty remains relevant and fit-for-purpose as the cornerstone of the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture,” said Malaysia.

Australia, Canada, China, and the UK, among others, welcomed the creation of the working group to strengthen the NPT review process, and/or look forward to participating in it.

Indonesia expressed hope that states would learn from the failure of the RevCon to strengthen the spirit of multilateralism, noting that this will be important as states are heading towards the upcoming high-level week of the UN General Assembly.

Thailand said that despite the failure of this RevCon to adopt a document, states must continue to honour their commitments to strengthen each of the NPT’s mutually reinforcing pillars. Türkiye said it will continue to give priority to the implementation of the 2010 action plan during the next review cycle.

The Netherlands expressed gratitude for the cooperation in different NPT related configurations, like the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), the Vienna Group of Ten, and the Stockholm Initiative in formulating and proposing concrete actions on risk reduction, transparency, reporting, accountability or strengthening the review process, a point echoed by Canada. Cuba urged to not pretend that nuclear risk reduction replaces disarmament commitments.

Singapore said that in the face of this failure, states parties should look ahead and work together in good faith towards achieving a better outcome in the next review cycle. To this end, it emphasised the importance of ensuring universal multilateral non-discriminatory and transparent negotiations.

Ireland said that the Conference’s inability to adopt an outcome means that states are not able to take decisions on key areas such as full recognition of humanitarian consequences and acknowledgement of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the unacceptability of destabilising threats to use nuclear weapons, and advancing risk reduction measures. Nonetheless, it argued the work done on these issues must inform the next review cycle and serve to guide states parties’ work.

The Netherlands said that it will now be up to all NPT states parties to focus on the new cycle and demand more clarity, transparency, and accountability from nuclear-armed states on their arsenals, doctrines, and modernisation plans.

Palestine said that “as long as existing agreements are not met and obligations are selectively upheld, as long as some states are not parties to the NPT, as long as nuclear tests continue to be carried out and nuclear weapons modernised and vertical and horizontal proliferation do not cease, as long as Israel continues to enjoy exception, and as long as the 1995 resolution on the Middle East remains unfulfilled, and as long as we are not decisively moving towards total nuclear disarmament, the world will not be safe.” It reiterated that its commitment towards a world free of nuclear weapons remains intact, and that it would continue to work towards achieving this goal.

Cuba raised many of these same concerns in its statement.

Sri Lanka encouraged “building back better” and pointed to lessons learned from not achieving the desired result. It also asked states to consider a scenario in which there is not an NPT. While not perfect, it has provided a long-lasting legal structure for other elements of the non-proliferation infrastructure.

Many other delegations also used their statements to reinforce their view of the NPT as a foundational, cornerstone agreement. For example, Japan highlighted the importance of upholding and strengthening the NPT as a

cornerstone of disarmament and non-proliferation and said that states cannot afford to stand still. Belgium, Chile, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Sweden and others also recognised the NPT as a cornerstone of nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Germany argued that the NPT's role as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture is not challenged by the failure of this conference to adopt a consensus outcome. Sierra Leone, on the other hand, recognised the historic success of the NPT, but stated that its credibility is now being questioned.

Switzerland stressed that the failure to adopt a document does not in any way call into question past agreements and outcomes, which, it said, remain valid and more important than ever before. Switzerland noted that the provisions of past outcome documents were included in the draft report of this conference and that no state has questioned this. The EU, Ireland, Sweden, Türkiye, and the UK reminded that the legal obligations enshrined in past outcomes remain valid.

Views on the content of the draft final report

Disarmament

Several delegations highlighted their concern about the revised draft final report falling short on disarmament.

Costa Rica observed that the document was “well below our expectations,” in particular because it fell short on concrete measures to advance toward nuclear disarmament. Costa Rica noted that good faith is lacking in the nuclear-weapon states' interpretation and application of Article VI, stating that the application of their duties under this article seem to only exist “if and when it fits a convenient political agenda.”

The **New Agenda Coalition (NAC)** noted it had put forward many proposals on measures to promote the fulfillment of Article VI obligations, stating that nuclear disarmament is a legal obligation as well as a moral and ethical

imperative. It is troubled by reluctance on the part of nuclear-armed states to accept language on enhancing transparency and accountability in disarmament through timelines and benchmarks. The NAC noted that the disarmament obligation must not be conditioned by security conditions, and that there is a positive obligation on states regardless of the existence of ideal circumstances. “Concrete disarmament would enhance trust,” said the NAC.

Iran also noted that there are no concrete timebound and measurable commitments by the nuclear-armed states to make urgent progress over the next review cycle and fulfil the nuclear disarmament obligations under Article VI. It said it was disappointing to see that paragraph 32(b) merely reflected the dangerous position and policy of NATO's nuclear-armed states.

Malaysia highlighted that “it has become evidently clear that there is absolutely no desire on the part of a handful of States Parties to fulfill their disarmament obligations, while at the same time forcing the majority to shoulder additional nonproliferation burdens with limitations on the access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.”

Austria said that the last four weeks show how the NPT cements the status quo or even backtracks on prior commitments. In this sense, Austria views the last four weeks as a validation and promotion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), its arguments, and rationale.

New Zealand registered its disappointment at the lack of progress on disarmament overall and said this must not continue into the next review cycle.

The Holy See said that despite many positive aspects, the draft text under consideration was severely lacking in the area of nuclear disarmament. It argued that it contained no meaningful new commitments for nuclear armed states to reduce reliance on nuclear deterrence. It also underlined that it did not contain any forward-looking actions aimed at addressing the humanitarian and the environmental consequences of the development, testing, and use of nuclear weapons.

The Philippines said that the draft highlighted that the business-as-usual approach to disarmament is not acceptable and that there is a need for transparency and accountability from the nuclear-armed states; this latter point was echoed by Australia. The Philippines also said that the draft highlighted the urgency of nuclear risk reduction and saw “clearly the human face of our work in the NPT” by referring to the individuals and communities impacted by nuclear weapons. The Philippines reminded that the “bottom line” should be the people. Australia also said that throughout the Conference, discussions about risk reduction moved beyond zero-sum debates into more nuanced dialogue that situated risk reduction as part of the discussion about nuclear disarmament.

In a joint statement, **Kazakhstan and Kiribati** said it is high time for all state parties to hold the nuclear-armed states accountable for their past behaviour and now long overdue disarmament obligations. They argued that states need to push hard for benchmarks and measures with respect to nuclear-armed states’ commitments under pillar one of the Treaty. The two further argued that nuclear-armed states must fulfil their legal obligations according to Article VI, and they should start by immediately providing negative security assurances to non-nuclear armed states, which should not be based on any conditionalities.

Sierra Leone said that among the three pillars of the treaty, the nuclear disarmament pillar has made very little slow and disappointing progress. It argued that there is no sense of urgency, no timelines, no benchmark, to the aspirations of nuclear risk reduction and total elimination of nuclear weapons. It argued that there is no legally binding security assurance to non-nuclear armed states, no moratorium on fissile materials, no agreement on no first use, and that nuclear deterrence still continues to prevail. It concluded by saying it would have loved to see more ambitious language on nuclear risk reduction, transparency and accountability, timelines, and benchmarks.

Iran said that the outcome documents should not have imposed new commitments on non-nuclear armed states while the nuclear armed states are

not complying with their nuclear disarmament obligations.

The US said it knows that non-nuclear-armed states strove for more progress on nuclear disarmament. “We hear you,” said the US.

Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

South Africa said it is time for the nuclear-armed and umbrella states to accept the reality of the TPNW and its consistency with the NPT, including Article VI, and to accept the legitimate concerns of non-nuclear-armed states on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. South Africa reminded delegates of two quotes; the first from Archbishop Desmond Tutu when he stated that “there are no safe hands for these nuclear weapons.” The second quote was from Nelson Mandela, about the need to ask states, when they present sophisticated arguments on their refusal to eliminate nuclear weapons, “Why do they need them anyway?”

Mexico presented a **joint statement** from TPNW states parties and signatories. Among other messages, the joint statement noted that:

We entered the NPT review conference in a constructive spirit and backed by evidence and new findings on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons, by the entry into force of the TPNW and by an ambitious programme and commitment to a world without nuclear weapons agreed at the TPNW’s first meeting of States Parties. We strove for a result that should not only be acceptable to all but that would actually advance the objectives of the NPT and strengthen the treaty itself.

The joint statement also noted that while the draft NPT outcome document pointed “to the urgency to act upon the unacceptable humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons, it then falls dramatically short of advancing nuclear disarmament and actually implementing Article VI of the NPT or even concretely addressing the serious risks inherent in nuclear weapons.” The African Group reinforced these points in its statement.

The Holy See noted that in June, the state parties of the TPNW adopted an action plan that ensures that limited albeit meaningful progress can be made on nuclear disarmament before the next NPT review conference. It reiterated its hope that the nuclear-armed states can find ways to engage in such progress, potentially in the areas of nuclear disarmament verification, victims' assistance, and environment remediation.

Palestine said that throughout this Conference, the non-nuclear armed states have been pleading, appealing, calling, and demanding for the bare minimum to advance towards nuclear disarmament. In this regard, Palestine argued that the Conference confirms the relevance and the just nature of the TPNW.

Cuba recalled a need for the prompt universalisation of the TPNW, stating that this important instrument complements the international architecture of security, disarmament, and non-proliferation. Cuba is proud to have been the fifth states to ratify the TPNW and that Latin America and the Caribbean has the largest number of states parties.

Regional issues

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) observed that it had contributed several working papers and other inputs through textual suggestions and oral interventions over the course of the Conference, some of which are reflected in the draft outcome but others were not. It reiterated many of its core positions and asks in its closing statement, several of which related to regional issues.

Lebanon, in a national capacity, said it felt that NAM proposals were not reflected sufficiently in the draft, especially in relation to advancing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. It, and the Arab Group, wanted a stronger commitment in this area. Egypt echoed these points, highlighting also that the 1995 resolution is tied to the NPT and its indefinite extension. Egypt noted that Israel remains the only country in the region that refuses to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-armed state. Syria described the language on the Middle East as "weak". Cuba also noted the lack of progress on a zone in the Middle East.

Iran expressed discontent over the issue of the establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East, reflected in paragraphs 165 to 172 of the draft, arguing that it was a product of a non-transparent and non-inclusive process that Iran was not part of. It said that the text disregarded the agreed basis and language on the Middle East issue endorsed and adopted by the 2000 and 2010 RevCons, in which the importance of Israel's accession to the NPT and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, among other aspects, were clearly affirmed. Cuba made similar points.

The African Group would have liked the outcome to call on nuclear-armed states to review their reservations or interpretative statements connected with their ratification of the NWFZ treaties. It spoke to the importance of the NWFZ that exists in Africa. Cuba expressed similar regret at the reluctance of some nuclear-armed states to withdraw or, even review, reservations or statements of unilateral interpretations of the protocols relating to NWFZ treaties and highlighted its support for the relevant regional treaty for Latin America.

The US said that there is a need to work on other areas including condemning nuclear tests of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Gender and youth

Canada said it believes that significant progress was made on gender at this Review Conference and it hopes that this work can also be carried forward. Australia noted the gender language was a modest but important breakthrough.

Germany appreciated that the Conference was able to shift the focus to topics that have been given less consideration in the past like youth and gender perspectives, victim assistance, and environmental remediation.

Ireland said this is the first full review cycle to consider gender issues from the start and said that states must build on the work done here to ensure the inclusion of a gender perspective throughout the next review cycle.

The ROK welcomed the commitment to empower and enable youth participation in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Civil society

Canada hopes to make progress on enhanced participation by civil society and affected communities, including Indigenous people, in the NPT process. Ireland said it looked forward to strengthening civil society engagement, including through the upcoming discussions on strengthening the review process to make the eleventh review cycle more inclusive and transparent.

Sierra Leone also said it would have loved to see more ambitious language on the participation of civil society in the RevCon.

Other

The African Group said it would have liked to see more on legally binding security assurances by all five nuclear-armed states parties against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, as well as stronger language on ending plans for modernisation.

The US expressed concern about the use of the phrase “common security” in para 11, which it said replaces UN language, which should not set a precedent.

Australia felt the opportunity to establish a clear moratorium on fissile materials was missed.



Image: Final plenary meeting of the Tenth NPT Review Conference © Ray Acheson

Side Event Report: Integrating and Operationalising Gender in the Tenth NPT Review Cycle

Audrey Kelly | Reaching Critical Will of WILPF

On Tuesday, 23 August 2022, the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the UN, together with the Reaching Critical Will programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), co-organised a side event to the Tenth NPT Review Conference (RevCon) entitled "Integrating and Operationalising Gender in the Tenth NPT Review Cycle." An impressive array of speakers took to the floor to share their thoughts on this matter, including Ambassador Maritza Chan, the Permanent Representative-designate of the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN; Frances Collins, the Deputy Director of the Nuclear, Missiles and Space, Disarmament & Non-Proliferation Section of the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs; and Ray Acheson, the Director of Reaching Critical Will, WILPF's disarmament programme. It was moderated by Allison Pytlak, the Manager of Reaching Critical Will of WILPF.

The session started with opening remarks by Allison Pytlak, who presented the speakers and stated that while, for WILPF, gender analysis has long been one of the fundamental underpinnings of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, for many years, WILPF was the only group expressing this perspective. Although there are now many more groups advocating for and supporting this analytical lens, there is also resistance to discussions of gender in the NPT regime. Therefore, Pytlak underscored that continuing to have intentional and constructive conversations about how to integrate and operationalise gender in the NPT is essential.

Pytlak proceeded to ask each of the four speakers a question about the topic at hand, beginning with Ambassador Maritza Chan. Pytlak asked Ambassador Chan to discuss some of the day-to-day challenges she faces and experiences as a woman leader in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation spaces.

Ambassador Chan began by stating that work done at the UN stems from the recognition that weapons of all kinds trigger violence, and that violence is inherently gendered. Despite this irrefutable reality, Ambassador Chan noted that most international instruments addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Programme of Action (UNPoA) on small arms and light weapons (SALW) are genderblind. She explained that over the course of the last two years, the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica has taken substantive steps towards addressing the gender blindness of international instruments, citing the example of the 2021 Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms (BMS7) on the UNPoA at which Costa Rica helped draft joint statements to protect gender-related language that would otherwise not be included.

However, Ambassador Chan decried the insufficiency of efforts, or lack thereof, made in this realm by the global community, and stressed the necessity of a qualitative and quantitative jump in order for international instruments to reflect gender-based realities on the ground. She noted that the Arms Trade Treaty only includes 24 words related to the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons, while the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), the most progressive international instrument related to nuclear weapons to date, only includes 111 words on gender. Despite this glaring and unacceptable issue, some delegations at the Tenth NPT Review Conference continue to relegate all gender-related matters to the sidelines, deeming it a "secondary issue" or a "Third Committee issue." Ambassador Chan powerfully reiterated that gender is not an add-on or a pawn in the power politics of international peace and security. She called for all involved parties to recognise that without inclusion "we cannot have peace, development, progress, and well-being," as

diversity makes decisions stronger, more well-rounded, and more sustainable and creates an environment for creation, innovation, and problem-solving—in other words, exactly what the UN needs. Ambassador Chan concluded by declaring that we all have a right to participate meaningfully in the negotiations that shape the decisions that affect our lives and that we must reiterate our commitment to fighting for the principles of gender equity and inclusivity, for “if we do not prioritise our commitment to humanity in all forms, weapons will make the decisions for us.”

Pytlak then posed the following question to Ray Acheson: what have been some key developments pertaining to the recognition of gendered perspectives in the Tenth NPT Review Conference—what are the gaps and what needs work?

Acheson began by outlining how gender has taken off at the NPT in this review cycle for the first time in certain limited ways. There were a number of side events on gender, a series of working papers pertaining to gender introduced by Ireland, and various language related to gender in all three Preparatory Committee Chair’s summaries. However, the current body of work on gender in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has mainly focused on the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons, such as the relationship between the Arms Trade Treaty and gender-based violence and the gendered impacts of ionizing radiation on women and girls, and, even more predominantly, the recognition that women have a role to play in disarmament and non-proliferation. After underscoring the bewildering reality that it is only after many years since the UN’s founding that this seemingly self-evident fact is beginning to be recognized, Acheson expressed that language on women’s participation and gendered impacts of nuclear weapons belies a very narrow interpretation of gender and of what is needed to break down the binaries and siloes across nuclear weapons systems.

Indeed, Acheson noted that language has still failed to capture the ways in which gender shapes nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons systems.

They cited several of the ideas expressed in Carol Cohn’s writing on gender—which they described as “foundational writing.” Firstly, they explained that one of the things Cohn speaks about is how the ways in which nuclear weapons are discussed in terms of their physical attributes are incredibly gendered, practically to an absurd extent. While this was more relevant in the 1980s during the Cold War era, it still proves relevant today. Secondly, Acheson discussed Cohn’s analysis of the ways in which approaches to power and security are coded through gender. Cohn argues that socially, we are conditioned to have certain normative attributes and act in certain ways if we have a specific body. These gender norms manifest themselves in the ways in which men who exhibit any kind of care and concern for nuclear consequences are shamed; Cohn argues that they are shamed through processes of feminisation, labeled as weaker, lesser than, told that they are falling into irrational patterns of behavior and that they are “emotional”—a word which Acheson astutely noted has recurred in the speeches of delegations throughout the Conference. In addition to ideas such as those articulated by Carol Cohn which examine the more insidious manifestations of gender norms in the NPT regime, Acheson discussed the vital importance of incorporating the concept of intersectionality into the NPT. They defined intersectionality as the way in which “people in the world experience different harms and oppressions based on different overlapping identities” and stated that the application of an intersectional feminist lens is important in nuclear weapons discussions because it allows us to think about how harms have been perpetuated—citing the historically racialized harms of nuclear weapons use and testing—and what has been made deliberately invisible by nuclear weapons states and why.

Acheson poignantly underscored that the matter of operationalising gender in the NPT regime is not merely about women’s participation: it is about all genders and making substantive changes that go beyond the promotion of gender inclusivity. Acheson concluded by affirming that breaking binaries of gender in the UN will help to open people’s minds to begin to break other binaries.

Pytlak then posed the following question to Deputy Director Frances Collins: how are some of the gender-related changes Ray mentioned are taking place in this NPT Review Cycle being implemented and acted on within Ireland, and how will Ireland operationalise and nationally implement agreements being reached in a multilateral setting?

Collins stated that it is always useful to use tools that are already there, and discussed the paramount importance of accountability—be it to the public, our colleagues, or our politicians. She explained that while it is great to have gender champions, people move on, particularly in foreign ministries. Therefore, in order to avoid gender ceasing to be a priority, Collins noted the importance of institutionalising the work that is being done on gender in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation so as to prevent this central issue from being marginalized. Collins notably emphasised the importance of Ireland's third National Action Plan (NAP) on Women, Peace and Security (WPS), which was finalised in 2020. She discussed the hard work that was done to ensure the integration of disarmament and non-proliferation into the Third Action Plan. She also echoed Ambassador Chan and Acheson's statements about the insufficient considerations of gender perspectives and approaches across all international instruments and noted that this was a matter that Ireland wanted to address in the Third NAP.

Collins further discussed the nuances of Ireland's NAP, stating that though she was not entirely sure, she believed Ireland was the only country to integrate both conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction into its National Action Plan. She noted that it could be wise to call for other countries to do something like this at the RevCon. Collins enumerated the four distinct pillars of the Irish National Action Plan—participation, protection, prevention, and promotion—and noted Ireland's big focus on women's participation as well as how surprised she was that this was what was being advocated for when she first joined the sector, as it is quite a low bar. She underscored that while women's participation in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is important, it is not the only facet of

operationalising gender in the NPT regime; youth as well as women must have the opportunity to meaningfully engage in these spaces, and while the participation of women is a prerequisite to making change in this space, it is not an end in and of itself, and it is important that we continue to report on it. This kind of data is necessary to push the area of gender in the NPT forward and make more ambitious gender progress. Collins also discussed the very innovative monitoring mechanism laid out in the Third Irish NAP, which calls for reliance on an international oversight group composed of both civil society groups and certain former members of Parliament. This group is tasked with looking at the Irish Action Plan so that it is both a national and international one. Collins concluded by saying that as we try to open up this space, we need to ensure that it is a sustained approach, and Ireland, as well as all the other NPT signatory states, needs to show that it is in it for the long haul.

The discussion portion of the side event fostered varied and interesting discussion. One person in attendance stated that while it is encouraging to see so many governments talk about gender, they worry that gender is used by some to artificially create a sense of progress where there is none. They then asked the following questions: how can we avoid co-opting conversations about gender and feminism? How can we learn from previous coalitions and make a coalition?

Collins was the first to respond, stating that we need to draw on what's there with civil society and get them to help us as well as use the institutional tools already at our disposal. She also reiterated the importance of demanding accountability, even in the way male and female representatives at these conferences are addressed, specifically citing the way male representatives are typically referred to as "Your Excellency" whilst a female representative is more likely to be referred to as "Madam Chair."

Ambassador Chan explained that gender is a structural problem at the UN and must therefore be addressed structurally: for instance, when women are head of delegations, there are statistically more female delegates. She also highlighted the importance of who reads the

statements, and called on delegations to make sure female delegates read statements. She stated that we must intentionally challenge narratives and dismantle the systems that have promoted masculine strength over human security, and that we must mentor women and work together with other brilliant women, because it is only when we join forces that we can effect change.

Acheson discussed the inadequacy and performativity of liberal and white feminisms—like “girlboss feminism”—which seek to “break the glass ceiling” and integrate hegemonic systems, but once they have done so, they do not attempt to change the injustices that occur within them. They cited a particular quote —“break the glass ceiling, but don’t pay attention to where the

shards fall”—to illustrate the superficiality of these feminist doctrines and the ways in which they contribute to upholding oppressive systems, the “shards” in question, which “fall” on people of colour, non-binary people, queer people, and other intersectionally marginalised groups.

Finally, Ambassador Chan highlighted the paramount importance of being active and intentional in order to make change, stating that “if you don’t engage you don’t exist” and “the worst crime you can commit is to be different.” Acheson reaffirmed the importance of community, noting that it is difficult to do activist work alone, and shared the following poignant final words: “Don’t give up, don’t be complicit, be radical, and always push to change the narrative about what is acceptable.”

Notes on Nuclear Weapons & Intersectionality in Theory and Practice

A WORKING PAPER

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Program on Science and Global Security, Princeton University

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NPT NEWS IN REVIEW

Reaching Critical Will (RCW) is the disarmament programme of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), the oldest feminist peace organisation in the world.

RCW works for disarmament and the prohibition of many different weapon systems; confronting militarism and military spending; and exposing gendered aspects of the impact of weapons and disarmament processes with a feminist lens.

RCW also monitors and analyses international disarmament processes, providing primary resources, reporting, and civil society coordination at various UN-related forums.

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Reaching Critical Will



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