

Public Statement to the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the
2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the
Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Faith Communities Concerned about Nuclear Weapons
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Since the first military attack using atomic weapons in August 1945, when the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were bombed, the terrible consequences of nuclear weapons have demanded their abolition. Since 1945, humankind has been forced to live in the shadow of apocalyptic destruction. Any use of nuclear weapons would not only destroy the past fruits of human civilization, it would disfigure the present and consign future generations to the grimmest of fates.

We reiterate our shared stance that nuclear weapons are incompatible with the values upheld by our respective faith traditions. We advocate for the right of people to live in security and dignity; we believe in the commands of conscience and justice; we seek to honor our duty to protect the vulnerable and to exercise the stewardship that will safeguard the planet for present and future generations. Nuclear weapons manifest a total disregard for all these values and commitments. There is no countervailing imperative—whether of national security, stability in international power relations, or the difficulty of overcoming political inertia—that justifies their continued existence, much less their use. Their catastrophic humanitarian consequences demand that nuclear weapons never be used again, under any circumstances.

This Preparatory Committee session is the beginning of the cycle leading up to the 50th anniversary of the NPT. We welcome the efforts of those States who have sought to fulfill their commitment to negotiate effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament by participating in the negotiations held this past March in New York. We applaud the world's political leaders who have demonstrated courage and vision in initiating negotiations on the prohibition of nuclear weapons. We urge those not yet participating to re-examine their positions and make a commitment to join the June-July session in good faith.

As people of faith, we urge States parties to:

1. Heed the voices of the world's hibakusha (all the victims of nuclear weapons) and recommit to the unequivocal undertaking to achieve and maintain a world without nuclear weapons, noting that the fundamental justification for a new legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, is the prevention of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of such weapons;
2. Recognize that all effective measures are mutually reinforcing and advancement in each area supports advancement in others. The negotiations on nuclear weapon prohibition; the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; halting the production and eliminating global stockpiles of fissile materials; irreversibly dismantling global nuclear weapon produc-

tion architecture; ending programs designed to increase the accuracy and versatility and lower the threshold for use of nuclear weapons; and eliminating nuclear weapon stockpiles, among other effective measures, are global undertakings, fully compatible with and contributing to the realization of the objectives and commitments of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty;

3. Lastly, we encourage all States to participate in good faith in the negotiations to be held in June-July in order to fulfill their obligation to pursue and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament as required by Article VI of the NPT and the unanimous conclusion of the International Court of Justice that the nuclear disarmament obligation is universal.
