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

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Including Peace and Disarmament Education in Implementing Universalization Obligations under Article 12

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I. Introduction

1. This working paper, written by Soka Gakkai International and the International Disarmament Institute, Pace University¹, discusses interpreting Article 12 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on Universality in light of the preambular paragraph: "Recognizing also the importance of peace and disarmament education in all its aspects and of raising awareness of the risks and consequences of nuclear weapons for current and future generations, and committed to the dissemination of the principles and norms of this Treaty..."

2. Additionally, the TPNW built on language from the 2010 Review Conference Outcome Document of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which "underscores the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education as a useful and effective means to ... achieving a world without nuclear weapons" (para. 96).

3. Furthermore, Article 12 of the TPNW states: "Each State Party shall encourage States not party to this Treaty to sign, ratify, accept, approve or accede to the Treaty, with the goal of universal adherence of all States to the Treaty." Under this article, states parties are required to take steps to encourage other states to join the treaty – with the ultimate goal of bringing every state on board. We believe peace and disarmament education plays a critical role in this aspect.

¹ We also thank Elizabeth Minor for her input to this working paper.

II. Why Include Peace and Disarmament Education in the Discussion about Universalization

4. The approach of including peace and disarmament education in discussions around universalizing the TPNW would commit states parties not only to universalizing the Treaty among states, but also of “raising awareness of the risks and consequences of nuclear weapons for current and future generations” among people. As the last preambular paragraph of the Treaty stresses “the role of public conscience in the furthering of the principles of humanity as evidenced by the call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” the UN, ICRC, and civil society—and particularly the world’s hibakusha and other individuals and communities affected by nuclear weapons—play a critical role in strengthening the norms of the TPNW, and for general and comprehensive disarmament.

5. Peace and disarmament education is essential to the achievement of the objectives of the TPNW, as awareness-raising for the public will help underpin and maintain the principles and norms of this Treaty globally. Peace and disarmament can only be achieved through an informed and continued demand by people, understanding each person’s common responsibility for achieving this goal and strengthening the norm that disarmament—including the prohibition of nuclear weapons—is a critical step for international peace and security.

6. In view of the fact that the universalization of the Treaty is a long-term process that would require continued change in the discourse around national, regional and international security, peace and disarmament education would be a crucial element underpinning this shift.

7. Moreover, peace and disarmament education plays a role in adherence to the Treaty by States. Public awareness and concerns around the issue contribute to attention to work under the TPNW by States Parties, creating stronger accountability. Public attention may also encourage States not party to the Treaty in their awareness of the TPNW and move towards ratification.

III. Recommendations

8. Based on the shared recognition that the horrors of nuclear weapons must never be visited upon any country, or any persons, we recommend that the States Parties of the TPNW consider the following:

(a) Articulate in statements and any outcome documents of TPNW Meetings of States Parties that peace and disarmament education is a key element of fulfilling obligations under Article 12;

(b) Provide funding and institutional support to international organizations, associations of survivors and affected communities, civil society, and educational institutions promoting peace and disarmament education, particularly regarding the TPNW and the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons;

(c) Support research on the humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons;

(d) Support research addressing the role that colonialism, racism, patriarchy and other structures of oppression have played and continue to play in the development, deployment, testing and use of nuclear weapons;

(e) Declassify documents and release information related to nuclear weapons activities, such as surveys of radiological conditions of test sites; fallout monitoring data; records of incidents, accidents and/or close calls;

(f) Support inclusion of youth in delegations and policy conversations regarding nuclear disarmament, including TPNW Meetings of States Parties and Intersessional meetings;

(g) Contribute to the Secretary-General's report on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education.
