

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **ASIA PACIFIC LEADERS CALL FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT**

**SEOUL 12 DECEMBER 2011.** Over thirty political, diplomatic and military leaders from fourteen Asia Pacific countries – including five former prime ministers and 10 former foreign and defence ministers – have signed a joint statement strongly supporting a nuclear weapons free world, and calling on policymakers to “get serious” about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

The statement (attached) expresses concern that the momentum for worldwide action, generated especially by President Obama’s 2009 Prague speech, is in danger of stalling, warns that the risks associated with nuclear weapons are much more acute than most policymakers accept and most publics are aware, and outlines the policy commitments that need to be made.

Released in Seoul today, the statement is the inaugural step in a planned ongoing advocacy campaign by the Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN), which was established recognising that this region impacts every dimension of the global nuclear agenda, with acute tensions and risks remaining in South Asia and the Korean Peninsula in particular.

The Convenor of the group, former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, said in launching the statement at a conference in Seoul:

The quest to eliminate nuclear weapons cannot begin to succeed without the determined engagement of policymakers in the Asia Pacific region. We hope that this stellar group of senior, respected and extraordinarily experienced individuals can really help make that happen.

### **About the APLN**

The Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) is a recently established advocacy group of over thirty former senior political, diplomatic and military leaders from fourteen countries around the region, from South Asia to East Asia and Australasia. The objective of the network is to inform and energize public opinion, and especially high-level policymakers, to take seriously the very real threats posed by nuclear weapons, and do everything possible to achieve a world in which they are contained, diminished and ultimately eliminated.

The network is modelled on a European counterpart (the ELN), established in 2010 and convened by former UK Defence Minister Lord Des Browne, which has already been active and visible in calling for urgent changes to NATO nuclear policy. The creation of both networks has been made possible by seed grants from the US-based Nuclear Threat Initiative, co-chaired by former Senator Nunn and CNN founder Ted Turner.

APLN seeks to build on the momentum generated by US national security policy heavyweights Henry Kissinger, Bill Perry, Sam Nunn and George Shultz who in 2007 called for nuclear weapons abolition in a Wall Street Journal article, and President Obama's 2009 Prague speech which committed the US to a vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

APLN is convened by former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, who previously served as co-chair of the International Commission for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICCNND) with Yoriko Kawaguchi, former Foreign Minister of Japan, also a member of APLN, and is designed to build upon the work of that Commission.

APLN members will contribute to the nuclear debate by making public statements from time to time, engaging in direct advocacy with regional governments as both public and private opportunities arise, commissioning research and hosting regional seminars and conferences as resources permit, and maintaining an active website ([www.a-pln.org](http://www.a-pln.org)) through its secretariat based at the Australian National University in Canberra.

Members of the APLN met for the first time in Tokyo on 10-12 November 2011, where those present agreed on the text of the Inaugural Statement released today: other members signed on subsequently. Working groups have been established to address the issues of nuclear deterrence, nuclear transparency and the potential for multilateralising the most sensitive stages of the nuclear fuel cycle.

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## Media Enquiries

Media enquiries should be addressed in the first instance to the Convenor, Professor Gareth Evans at [ge@gevans.org](mailto:ge@gevans.org)

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