



APLN Co-Convenors' Statement on the UN Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty

The Co-Convenors of the Asia-Pacific Leadership Network on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) welcome the historic vote at the United Nations by 122 States Parties of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) to ban the bomb. We note that among the nearly two-thirds of the NPT members were 26 countries from the Asia-Pacific, including nine of the ten members of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and seven Pacific Island states.

The Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty expresses in simple but powerful language the international community's abhorrence of nuclear weapons and affirms the nuclear weapon prohibition global norm both as a moral imperative for all states and a legally binding obligation for all signatories. It thus restates the vision and dream of a nuclear weapon free world that has animated the international community for decades and that finds expression in Article VI of the NPT. As the continuing and intensifying challenge of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs reminds us, nuclear weapons pose an unacceptable existential threat to humanity.

At the same time, we recognize the point of the objection by a strong minority of States, including several in the Asia-Pacific, that the new UN treaty will not in and by itself lead to the elimination of any nuclear weapons. That said, nuclear weapon possessing countries can take several practical steps to ease rising nuclear anxieties by reducing nuclear risks. We call on them to immediately freeze nuclear stockpiles at existing numbers, secure the remaining ratifications to bring the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force, extend the New START agreement, continue the critical work of the Nuclear Security Summits, take nuclear warheads off high-alert status, adopt no-first-use policies, refrain from introducing destabilizing new nuclear weapons, and commence negotiations on nuclear weapon reductions.

July 8th, 2017

Signed

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