

MEDIA RELEASE

ASIA PACIFIC LEADERS CALL FOR URGENT NEW MOVES AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS

4 September 2014. Twenty-nine political, diplomatic, military and scientific leaders from fourteen Asia Pacific countries – including former prime ministers, foreign and defence ministers – have signed a joint declaration strongly supporting a nuclear-weapon free region and world, and calling on policymakers to urgently re-energize the nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and security agendas.

The Jakarta Declaration on Nuclear Weapons (attached), among many other recommendations, calls for three immediate confidence-building steps towards disarmament, all realistically achievable in the short to medium term, to be taken by each of the nuclear-armed states in the region – the US, Russia, China, India and Pakistan, as well as the breakout state of North Korea.

First, it urges all nuclear-armed states (and allies like Japan, South Korea and Australia relying on their nuclear protection) to commit to “No First Use” of nuclear weapons, and calls for a Convention to be negotiated making that commitment universal and binding.

Second, recognizing that Asia is the only region in the world where nuclear stockpiles are growing, it urges at least a freeze on present arsenals, and their transparent reduction over time to the lowest levels consistent with maintaining minimum effective retaliatory capability.

Third, it urges all nuclear-armed states to take nuclear weapons off high operational alert, to avoid their forward deployment, and to separate warheads from land and air-based delivery vehicles.

The Convenor of the group, former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, said in releasing the statement:

“Nuclear weapons are not yesterday’s problem but today’s. The deteriorating security environment in a number of volatile regions makes it more critical than ever to recapture a sense of urgency about the scale and gravity of the risks posed by the world’s 16,000 remaining nuclear weapons.

APLN leaders have shown the way in this very strong and sharply worded statement. We are not naïve about the difficulties involved in moving quickly to a nuclear-weapon free world, but realistic steps can be taken immediately to significantly reduce nuclear risks. It’s time for leaders to listen, and act.”

About the APLN

The Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) is an advocacy group, formed in 2011, of former senior political, diplomatic and military and scientific leaders from 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.

Supported by the US-based Nuclear Threat Initiative, co-chaired by former Senator Nunn, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation of Japan, 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 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) through its Secretariat based at the Australian National University in Canberra (<http://cnnd.anu.edu.au/>).

Media Enquiries

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