



## INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR

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### **24<sup>th</sup> General Assembly Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean 26 November 2015**

Thank you for this opportunity to address the 24<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War believes that the negotiation and ratification of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1969 showed us how to achieve a nuclear-weapons-free world, and we commend the OPANAL Member States for their consistent efforts to extend the principles of this Treaty to the world as a whole.

We are at a pivotal moment in the history of the nuclear age. How we deal with this moment may determine humanity's future.

Although the Cold War of the previous century is long over, the weapons that defined that war still threaten everyone on Earth. Almost 15,000 nuclear weapons remain in the hands of the US and Russia, and hundreds more are in the arsenals of seven other States.

In recent years, climate scientists have determined that the use of as few as 100 Hiroshima-sized nuclear weapons in a limited, regional nuclear war would severely disrupt the global climate, shortening growing seasons and reducing grain harvests for a decade or more. IPPNW has concluded from the published data that this "nuclear famine" would threaten at least two billion people with starvation.

These grim findings mean that as long as nuclear weapons exist, no one is safe from the consequences of a nuclear war anywhere in the world.

Fortunately, we also live in a time when a renewed understanding of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons has brought States and civil society together around a new political movement for their elimination.

We applaud the Governments of Norway, Mexico and Austria for their leadership in hosting the three groundbreaking intergovernmental conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons.

The Humanitarian Pledge launched at the conclusion of the Vienna HINW conference has been joined by more than 120 States—including every OPANAL Member State. A new Open-Ended Working Group led by Mexico, with a mandate from the General Assembly to negotiate and recommend “concrete and effective legal measures to achieve nuclear disarmament,” has an opportunity to set a new course and break out of the gridlock that has blocked all progress for decades.

ICAN—the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, launched by IPPNW in 2007—believes that a new treaty banning nuclear weapons based on their unacceptable consequences is the most effective way to fill the legal gap identified in the Humanitarian Pledge.

A ban treaty would send a clear message that nuclear weapons cannot be justified as a means of providing security for a few countries while jeopardizing the security of the large majority who have rejected them. The nuclear-armed States claim to understand the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. If so, then they have opted to disregard them. Under a ban treaty, they would no longer have that option.

The OPANAL Member States have played an important role in this new humanitarian initiative. The next step—implementing the Humanitarian Pledge—could set us on a road to a worldwide nuclear-weapons-free zone that will finally fulfill the promise of Tlatelolco.

Thank you.