



**Joint Communiqué of the Executive Secretary of AFCONE and  
Secretary-General of OPANAL on  
The Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons  
and the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of  
Nuclear Weapons**

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) and the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), representing 77 State Parties to the African and Latin America & Caribbean Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZs), congratulate the Government of Austria for hosting the Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

We are deeply concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The outcomes of the three previous conferences in Oslo (2013), Nayarit, Mexico (2014), and Vienna (2014) highlighted the fact that, no State or International Organisation, has the capacity to deal with the devastating consequences of a single nuclear weapon detonation, whether by accident miscalculation or design.

These conferences and the relevant follow up actions implemented by the majority of the UN Member States, international and regional organisations, as well as civil society representatives, paved the way to the successful negotiation, adoption, and entry into force on 22 January 2021 of the Treaty on Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The five existing Nuclear Weapon Free Zones and Mongolia have proven successful in stigmatising and marginalising nuclear weapons. Africa and Latin America & Caribbean have consistently promoted the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons, as enshrined in the Treaty of Pelindaba and the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The AFCONE and OPANAL reiterate that the Humanitarian Imperatives lie at the heart of the call for a world free of nuclear weapons, promoted by the TPNW provisions and as an effective measure to comply with Article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation.

The Treaty of Tlatelolco was the first ever international instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation with a humanitarian approach.

Africa, the continent to have (a) developed and then voluntarily destroyed its nuclear weapons (b) suffered from the devastating and immoral nuclear tests undertaken in the Algerian Sahara in the 1960s.

There is more than **13 000** Nuclear Weapons in Existence (2021), with allocation of vast resources to retain and modernise them, in a world where the basic human needs of billions, including the achievement of the development goals, remain unfulfilled. The nine nuclear-armed states spent



About \$82.4 billion on their nuclear arsenals in 2021, an inflation-adjusted increase of \$6.5 billion from last year, spending almost \$157,000 a minute on weapons of mass destruction<sup>1</sup>.

The Nuclear Risk is greater than ever considering the situation in Ukraine and the explicit threats to use nuclear weapons have enhanced this imminent menace.

The AFCONE and OPANAL are convinced that only the total elimination of nuclear weapons may act as the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Thus encourage those States that have not yet done so to accede, without further delay, to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

The AFCONE and OPANAL support the Humanitarian Pledge and call upon the State Parties to the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones to incorporate the outcomes of the four Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and the First Meeting of the State Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) during the deliberations of the forthcoming X NPT Review Conference including its final document.

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<sup>1</sup> Squandered: 2021 Global Nuclear Weapons Spending. ICAN Report/2022