

Reiner Braun, Co-Präsident des International Peace Bureau, am 30.3.2017 zum Stand der Diskussion

Press Release: Changing the game on nuclear weapons

More than 120 countries are participating in the talks to negotiate a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons since Monday March 27th- in the UN headquarters in New York. While the nuclear weapons states and their allies are not in the room, the tenants of the ban treaty are counting on the delegitimation effects of the treaty to drive the world toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

On the three first days of this first session, that will last until Friday, delegates expressed their will to anchor the treaty and its preamble in the humanitarian considerations that have been the driving pitch to lead to these negotiations, and confirmed their conviction that there is the need to fill a legal gap: nuclear weapons are the only weapons of mass destruction which are not yet prohibited by law.

"This is an historical moment, the negotiations are focussing on "a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons and lead toward their total elimination" said Co-President of the International Peace Bureau, Reiner Braun, "this is what the vast majority of peoples have been seeking for years, and we must make sure the treaty opens the door to elimination." Civil society representatives, experts and survivors of the atomic bombings have been contributing to the debate, reflecting the role that they have played to start these negotiations.

As well expressed today by the Ambassador of Trinidad and Tobago, the feeling in the room is very serious and committed: "We are standing on the precipice of history as we seek to shatter the chronic stalemate that has existed in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for far too long." While the ghosts of the nuclear weapons states and their allies are haunting the room, participants seems convinced that a ban treaty will change the game, provide a strong tool for public opinions to pressure their governments and open the eyes on the dangers of an accidental or intentional detonation that will occur if keeping nuclear weapons for ever.

Indeed, experts are now convinced that the question about the next nuclear detonation is not "if", but "when", as new studies and declassified documents show the vulnerabilities of the whole nuclear infrastructure. "An efficient ban treaty is absolutely needed," stresses Mr Braun, " and if we want it to be effective in changing the policies and practices of nuclear-armed and nuclear-reliant states, the treaty must prohibit all the activities that enable all current policies and practices. It must be simple, clear, efficient and goal oriented".

This week should provide a clear ground for the President of the Conference Mrs Elayne Whyte Gómez from Costa Rica to present a draft treaty before the next and last round of negotiations from June 15 to July 7th. Civil society is already calling for a global day of demonstrations on July 17 lead by women's organisations to demonstrate the strong commitment to ban nuclear weapons and free the world from the threat of nuclear weapons.

IPB press release: Success of the negotiations on a nuclear weapons ban treaty United Nations -New York-Apr 1st

The first session of the negotiations "on new legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons , leading toward their total elimination" have ended yesterday, Friday March 31st at the UN headquarters in New York on a successful note, and a draft treaty is due to be presented in the second half of May.

Over 130 countries participated in this first round of discussions with international organizations, experts and civil society representatives in a spirit of openness and sincere commitment to the goals of the discussions. " This is an historical process," said Reiner Braun Co-President of the International Peace Bureau, a peace movement that was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1910, " it is the first time in UN negotiations especially on nuclear weapons, that the super-powers stand outside of the room. We have felt an impressive spirit of courage, empowerment and emergency to prohibit the worst weapons ever conceived."

The works went well and fast, as described by ICRC representative, Mr Lou Maresca, who

emphasized that at the end of the week “ all ICRC expectations were met and exceed” with the perspective of “ clear and robust” prohibitions after the second round that will take place from June 15 to July 7th.

Before the next round, all countries including nuclear weapons states, will meet in Vienna (May2-12) for the 1st Preparatory committee of the Non Proliferation Treaty. The Treaty is facing major challenges especially from the proponents of nuclear weapons. The lack of implementation of the commitments and the planned modernization of all the arsenals stands in contradiction with nuclear weapons states obligations under Article VI ” to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament ”and worrying declarations of the Trump administration that this commitment to nuclear disarmament could be dismissed in the next US Nuclear Posture Review.

The vast majority of governments and peoples are frustrated by the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament in regards to the threats that these weapons are posing to the very survival of humankind and our environment. There was a broad agreement this week in New York that the Ban Treaty should clearly focus on the humanitarian costs of nuclear weapons and the unacceptability of weapons designed to indiscriminately kill civilians.

Once again in a treaty process to prohibit an indiscriminate weapon, civil society has and is playing a key role that many delegations have welcome. “ If we want to achieve in July a simple, efficient and goal oriented treaty, and advance our final goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons, the development of a broad grass root mobilisation will be essential” said Braun, as the IPB is already calling to participate in the Women’s March to ban the bomb on June 17th in New York.

IPB also recalls the outrageous cost of the production nuclear weapons in the nine possessors countries, which is considered to exceed 110 billion US\$ per year, and the cost of the consequences of any use of one of the 16 000 existing nuclear weapons can’t be valued when targeting a major city. The Global Day Against Military Expenditures, a major IPB campaign GDAMS, will see many actions around the world starting on April 18th, with a special focus this year on the cost of nuclear weapons programs.