



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
3 August 2016

English only

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## Open-ended Working Group taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations<sup>1</sup>

Geneva 2016

Item 5 of the agenda

**Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations**

### Open letter to support the work of the Open-ended Working Group

#### Submitted by Mayors for Peace

1. We, Mayors for Peace, are writing to voice our strong support for the work of the UN General Assembly's Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations, which will resume its deliberations in Geneva on 5 August. We wish to commend all participating delegations for their contributions to previous sessions of this Group. These efforts have helped to keep nuclear disarmament high on the international agenda, exactly where it belongs.
2. We believe that the Working Group's mandate of addressing "concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons" is timely, well advised, and clearly in the interest of all humanity.
3. As Mayors, we understand well the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of any nuclear weapons, especially on cities. We believe any such use would constitute a gross violation of international humanitarian law and a crime against humanity. We are deeply concerned that cities would likely be targets in any future nuclear war and that no such city could conceivably be prepared to respond to the humanitarian, economic, and environmental consequences of such an attack.
4. While we wish to commend the UN General Assembly and the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for their longstanding efforts to reduce the world's nuclear arsenals as the step toward a world without nuclear weapons, we are dismayed that nuclear disarmament negotiations have not taken place, despite the legal obligation in the NPT—which entered into force 46 years ago—to undertake such negotiations in good faith. The lack of such negotiations, coupled with lavishly funded

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<sup>1</sup> Established pursuant to resolution 70/33 of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

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nuclear weapons modernization programs in all States that possess such weapons, does not suggest to us any serious commitment to advance the cause of global nuclear disarmament.

5. Our cities are not only at risk of a catastrophic nuclear attack, but they are suffering due to the loss of huge economic and financial resources that have been diverted by weapons programs away from meeting basic human needs of our cities and citizens everywhere.

6. This is why the work of this Working Group is so important. We hope that the outcome of its August session will mark a significant new turning point bringing the world closer to achieving a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons. This is a cause that deserves the support of all UN Member States and all members of civil society, in all States.

7. We warmly welcome the recent visit to Hiroshima by President Obama and his sincere and eloquent words concerning the tragic humanitarian consequences of war and the use of nuclear weapons. The Obama Administration's reported plan to change its nuclear strategy that includes the adoption of a "no-first-use" policy could be a significant step toward a world without nuclear weapons and we sincerely hope that the change will lead our world closer to nuclear disarmament. It is also our hope that all the world's leaders will visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and to listen to the moving testimonies of the survivors of those tragic attacks.

8. We are proud that our current membership has risen to 7,095 cities in 161 countries and regions, representing a combined population of over a billion people. We are determined to continue to expand our efforts for nuclear disarmament until the day when it is finally achieved. On that day, our fellow citizens everywhere will no longer live in fear under the dark nuclear cloud and they will have new resources available to address the real needs of their communities.

9. We note that the city motto of Geneva is "Out of darkness, light" (*post tenebras lux*) and hope that when the Working Group concludes its work in August, this will be its motto as well. For the sake of our own and future generations, may the participating delegations light the way to a world free of nuclear weapons.

July 29, 2016

President, Mayor of Hiroshima, Japan

Vice president, Mayor of Nagasaki, Japan

Vice president, Lord Mayor of Hannover, Germany

Vice president, Mayor of Volgograd, Russian Federation

Vice president, Mayor of Malakoff, France

Vice president, Mayor of Muntinlupa, Philippines

Vice president, Lord Mayor of Manchester, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Vice president, Mayor of Akron, United States of America

Vice president, Mayor of Ypres, Belgium

Vice president, Mayor of Biograd na Moru, Croatia

Vice president, Mayor of Granollers, Spain

Vice president, Mayor of Halabja, Iraq

Vice president, Mayor of Brussels, Belgium

Vice president, Mayor of Fongo-Tongo, Cameroon

Vice president, Mayor of Mexico City, Mexico

Vice president, Mayor of Frogn, Norway

Executive, Governor of Bangkok, Thailand

Executive, Mayor of Fremantle, Australia

Executive, Mayor of Semey, Kazakhstan

Executive, Mayor of Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Executive, Mayor of Cochin, India

Executive, Mayor of Montreal, Canada

Executive, Mayor of Wellington, New Zealand

Executive, Mayor of Santos, Brazil

Executive, Mayor of Cartago, Costa Rica

Executive, Mayor of Bogota, Colombia

Executive, Mayor of Des Moines, United Sates of America

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