
Conference on Disarmament

14 November 2016

Original: English

Note Verbale dated 26 September 2016 from the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament transmitting the document entitled “Cuba commemorates the 26 September: International Day for total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International organizations in Switzerland presents its compliments to H.E. Mr. Michael Møller, Director-General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament, and has the honour to attach herewith the document entitled “Cuba commemorates the 26 September: International Day for Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons” (Spanish and English versions).

The Permanent Mission kindly request that the Secretariat of the Conference on Disarmament to circulate electronically this document to all member and observer States to the Conference on Disarmament and to be issued as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Cuba to the United Nations Office at Geneva and other International Organizations in Switzerland avails itself of this opportunity to renew to H.E. Mr. Michael Møller, Director General of the United Nations Office in Geneva and Secretary General of the Conference on Disarmament, the assurances of its highest and most distinguished consideration.

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Cuba Welcomes September 26: The International Day for the total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

I. Priority of nuclear disarmament

There is a growing global concern over the serious threat posed to humanity by the existence of nuclear weapons and their possible use or threat of use.

Nuclear disarmament is an international priority and deserves attention at the highest level. The only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of such weapons is their prohibition and total elimination.

The use of nuclear weapons cannot be justified under any circumstances or security doctrine. For its catastrophic humanitarian consequences, the use of nuclear weapons would involve the flagrant violation of international standards, including those related to the prevention of genocide and environmental protection.

Latin America and the Caribbean was the first densely populated region of the planet established as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone under the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

Moreover, it was the first region in the world formally proclaimed as "Zone of Peace" on the occasion of the Second Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in Havana, Cuba, in January 2014. The proclamation of the Zone of Peace carries with it the commitment of all States in the region to move towards nuclear disarmament as a priority and to contribute to general and complete disarmament. In addition, in various special declarations adopted at the level of Heads of State and Government of the CELAC, the Community has renewed its commitment to the preservation of peace and international security, political independence and nuclear disarmament, leading to general, complete and verifiable disarmament.

The Member countries of the Non-Aligned Movement have historically promoted the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons as a top priority in the field of disarmament. The Declaration and the Final Document adopted at the 17th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, held in September 17 and 18 in Margarita Island, Venezuela, reaffirmed it.

II. Multilateral efforts

Multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the United Nations Charter, provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues, including nuclear disarmament.

The first resolution of the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1946 promoted the elimination of nuclear weapons from national armaments. The final document adopted by the first special session of the United Nations General Assembly devoted to disarmament, in 1978, also gave nuclear disarmament the highest priority.

The International Court of Justice, in its advisory opinion of 1996, concluded that there was an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under a strict and effective international control, taking into account that the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances, constitute a violation of the International Law and a crime against humanity.

In high-level meetings of the United Nations General Assembly on nuclear disarmament, successfully carried out every year since 2013 on the occasion of 26

September, there has been broad international support for the priority of nuclear disarmament.

However, there are still more than 15,000 nuclear weapons, of which 4,300 are ready for immediate use and a new generation of nuclear weapons is being developed, which threatens to reactivate the Cold War arms race.

The failure of the Ninth Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 2015, undermined the efforts to strengthen the NPT regime as a whole. The breach of obligations under article VI of the Treaty, which establishes the commitment to negotiations in order to take effective measures relating to nuclear disarmament, has reinforced the sense of frustration of the vast majority of nations.

It is necessary to redouble efforts to advance the multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament.

Therefore, the full implementation of the mandates adopted in the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly on the "Follow-up to the High-Level Meeting of 2013 of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament" is very important. In those resolutions, reference was made to the early conclusion of a comprehensive convention on nuclear weapons prohibiting the possession, development, production, acquisition, testing, stockpiling, transfer, use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and on their destruction.

The United Nations General Assembly took the important initiative to convene for the first time in the history of the Organization, an International High-Level Conference on Nuclear Disarmament not later than 2018, to review the progress made in this regard.

At that Conference the resulting report will be forwarded, including the recommendations of the open-ended working group on nuclear disarmament established by resolution 70/33 "Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations" of the General Assembly. The group took the historic decision last August 19, to recommend to the United Nations General Assembly to start negotiations in 2017 on a legally binding instrument to ban nuclear weapons with a view to their elimination.

Cuba encourages the implementation of activities to celebrate the "International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons." It is crucial to raise awareness among the population and expand their knowledge about the threat posed to humanity by the nuclear weapons and the need for its total elimination in order to mobilize international efforts to achieve this goal. In this context, it invites Member States, the United Nations system, the civil society, the academia, parliamentarians, the media and individuals to perform appropriate actions to celebrate this date.
