



Minister Flanagan welcomes new UN Resolution on Nuclear Disarmament

The Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Charlie Flanagan T.D. welcomes the majority vote that just passed at the UN in New York, on the establishment of a ground-breaking new diplomatic conference to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, with a view to their total elimination.

This historic conference will begin its work in New York in early 2017. The treaty negotiations will be the first multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in over twenty years. They will be an important step towards the fulfilment of the nuclear disarmament commitments already made under the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty/NPT; the 2030 Agenda; and the shared goal of achieving a world free from nuclear weapons.

The negotiations, which will take place at the United Nations, will aim for the broadest possible level of agreement and will be open to all States; to civil society partners and to international organisations.

Speaking after the vote, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Charlie Flanagan T.D stressed that *“Ireland is resolute in its commitment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We look forward to the contribution which a new Prohibition Treaty can make to the strengthening and full implementation of the disarmament pillar of the NPT.”*

Minister Flanagan further noted that *“The decision to convene this new disarmament conference is both an important recognition of the suffering which has been caused by the detonation and testing of nuclear weapons in the past and an indication by the majority of UN Member States that such terrible harm must never be caused again in the future.*

The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of these indiscriminate weapons are well known. We know that there is no capacity for an adequate humanitarian response to any nuclear detonation, either accidental or on purpose, and that the risks of such a detonation are high.

They remain the only weapons of mass destruction which have not yet been prohibited.

All NPT States Parties made a commitment to nuclear disarmament. Yet, almost 50 years later, 17,000 nuclear weapons remain in existence and are a threat to us all.

We share the view of the International Committee of the Red Cross that all States have a responsibility to act. This is a time for leadership, humility and courage. The moment has come to take action and we encourage all States to engage fully and in good faith in the negotiation process next year.”

ENDS

Press Office

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

The UN Resolution, which was tabled by representatives of the governments of Austria, Brazil, Ireland, Mexico, Nigeria and South Africa; and supported by almost 60 Co-Sponsors at the UN First Committee has its foundation in the Final Report of the Open Ended Working Group/OEWG on “Taking Forward Multilateral Disarmament Negotiations”, which was adopted in August this year.

The Resolution essentially operationalises the recommendations from the Final Report.

The work of the OEWG built on an earlier OEWG held in 2013 and on the findings of three Conferences on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons held in Oslo, Nayarit and Vienna from 2012-2014. These conferences included important new findings on the gendered impact of nuclear weapons and the need for diverse engagement in nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The OEWG was established by a large majority vote in the UN at First Committee in 2015. It was chaired by Ambassador Thani Thongpakhdi of Thailand, who presented the Final Report to the UN earlier this month.