

Steps toward a Nuclear Weapons Convention: Exploring and developing legal and political aspects

Seminar and roundtable

Hosted by the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN in Geneva

with support from:

The Simons Foundation

International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms (IALANA)

International Network of Engineers and Scientists Against Proliferation (INESAP)

International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), and
Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

Thursday November 13, 2008

9:30 – 17:45

Room 23

Palais des Nations, Geneva

Introduction:

High-level support for the goal of a nuclear weapons free world from officials and former officials in key nuclear weapon States has created an opening to explore the possibilities for taking concrete steps toward such a goal. Such a world will require a universal treaty – or package of agreements – in order to provide for a comprehensive prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. It is thus timely to explore the legal, technical and political elements required for comprehensive nuclear abolition – and identify steps which could be taken in the short and medium term.

There is already considerable work being done on technical aspects for nuclear disarmament - including physical steps for de-alerting, dismantling and destroying weapons; verification mechanisms and technologies, and fuel cycle controls.

This seminar/roundtable will provide a setting for delegates to consider and discuss legal and political steps.

Note: Seminar language will be English

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Provisional Program

9:15 Registration

9:30 Session 1: Opportunities and imperatives

Chair: **H.E. Laura Thompson**, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva

Keynote:

Mohammed Bedjaoui, former President of the International Court of Justice, and former Minister of Foreign Affairs for Algeria

Implementing the nuclear disarmament obligation in all its aspects

Comment:

Greg Austin, Vice-President East-West Institute

A Nuclear Weapons Convention in the new political environment

Discussion

10:45 Coffee break

11:00 Session 2: Negotiations – What, How, Why and Where!

Chair: **Alyn Ware**, International Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms, and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament

H.E. Laura Thompson, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva
An introduction to the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention

Tim Caughley, Director of the Geneva Branch UN Office for Disarmament Affairs
Making progress through concurrent initiatives and forums.

Thomas O'Grady, Mayor of North Olmsted, Ohio and member of Mayors for Peace
Stimulating negotiations through the Hiroshima/Nagasaki Protocol

Discussion

12:30 **Lunch**

14:00 Session 3: Legal aspects and measures

Chair: Phon van den Biesen, Vice-President IALANA

John Burroughs, Executive Director, Lawyers' Committee on Nuclear Policy
General obligations for a NWC – initial steps by the NWS

Peter Becker, Vice-President IALANA
Building confidence in nuclear abolition: Individual responsibility and societal verification

Ed Aguilar, Director, Project for Nuclear Awareness
National implementation: Individual responsibility and criminalising nuclear weapons activities

Discussion

15:15 Coffee

15:45 Session 4: Political aspects and measures

Chair: Dr Andreas Nidecker, IPPNW

H.E. Caroline Millar, Permanent Representative of Australia to the UN in Geneva
Promoting nuclear abolition through the International Commission on Non-proliferation and Disarmament

Moritz Kutt and Martin Cieslik: Students from Technische Universität Darmstadt
Reflections on the 2008 model negotiating conference for a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Jeremy Corbyn MP, Member of the UK House of Commons and PNND Global Council
Parliamentary actions to support a Nuclear Weapons Convention

Carlos Vargas Pizarro, Law Professor and Legal Consultant, Costa Rica
The NWC and the abolition of war – the Costa Rican experience

Discussion

17:15 Seminar conclusion

H.E. Laura Thompson, Ambassador of Costa Rica to the United Nations in Geneva