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Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico

Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

Nayarit, 13 February 2014

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and welcome to the beautiful Mexican Pacific Coast. From now on, Nayarit will be a necessary reference with respect to our efforts towards disarmament.

We very much appreciate your participation in this Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which are undoubtedly the most dangerous, destructive, indiscriminate and risky weapons created by men.

Several reasons explain why is it important to gather experts from governments, civil society and international organizations to talk about the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons today here in Nayarit.

First, because their destructive power cannot be circumscribed to a specific time and space. Nuclear weapons destroy military targets and innocent civilian alike. Hiroshima and Nagasaki proved that these weapons can indiscriminately devastate everything within their reach and beyond, and that their destructive effects last for decades.

Second, and incredible as it sounds, because nuclear weapons are the sole weapons of mass destruction whose existence has not yet been explicitly prohibited in a legally binding treaty.

Let us recall that nuclear disarmament was the subject matter of the very first UN General Assembly resolution. And today, nearly 70 years later, this goal is yet to be achieved.

After more than four decades of existence of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is troublesome that its provisions, obligations and commitments on nuclear disarmament have not been implemented.

Today there are more States possessing nuclear weapons than there were during the Cold War. This is the Damocles sword hanging over our heads.

The threat is clear and ongoing: as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist, there will be someone trying to acquire and use them. The risk of a nuclear explosion – be it accidental or intentional – or their use by non-state actors will remain a latent possibility.
There are over 17,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many of which are held in high operational alert, and States that possess these weapons continue to invest millions of dollars every year for their modernization, instead of using these resources to address needs of a real social value.

Some seek to justify their existence for the sake of the world’s security, but the security of the world cannot depend on the threat of its own destruction.

We believe that true security requires the opposite: nuclear weapons should be prohibited and eliminated. Nevertheless, the various UN disarmament fora have not produced any substantive work for almost two decades, leading to the frustration of the vast majority of countries, giving way to the concern that gathers us today to remember and voice the unacceptable condition we live in.

Mexico reiterates its inalienable position in favor of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We believe, as we upheld in 1995 before the International Court of Justice, that the sole possession of nuclear weapons by a handful of States could only be interpreted in the context of the NPT as transitory, pending the full compliance with their obligation to eliminate such weapons. This tolerance has never meant an acceptance of the lawfulness or legitimacy of the possession of nuclear arsenals.

Mexico condemns the existence, possession and, of course, the use or threat of use of these dreadful weapons.

Their use by any group or State would be unjustifiable, immoral and suicidal for humanity, for it would render our planet inhabitable. Last October, during the UN General Assembly, 125 States highlighted that the awareness of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must strengthen and renew our efforts towards nuclear disarmament.

We cannot avoid our historical responsibility. It is for this reason that 127 countries met in Oslo almost a year ago, in March 2013, to understand the magnitude of the effects of a nuclear explosion from a humanitarian perspective.

Governments, international organizations and representatives of civil society concluded that no country or international organization would be able to face the gruesome immediate consequences of a nuclear detonation. As Nobel Peace Laureate Alfonso Garcia Robles once said: “the living would envy the bad fortune of the dead”.

Allow me to reiterate Mexico’s recognition to the Government of Norway for hosting the first Conference and for the enthusiasm and support it has provided us with in the preparation of this second edition, where we will carry on with the dialogue that began in Oslo. We will address the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons from a global and multidisciplinary perspective, in the mid and long term.
It is clear for Mexico that the fact that over 140 members of the United Nations are gathered here today, engaging with civil society from all around the world, reaffirms before the international community our shared commitment: to achieve a more secure and peaceful world; a world free of nuclear weapons.

The interest shown towards this common purpose is already a clear indication of the success of this Second Conference.

Today we harvest Oslo’s achievements, and tomorrow we will discuss how to capitalize the consensus and ambition of this meeting in Nayarit, aiming our efforts to the one logical conclusion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Mexico I invite you all to work for the current and future well-being of our societies.

Let us reiterate our rejection of nuclear weapons, condemn their use or threat of the use, and their mere existence. Let this rejection be the pillar of human security.

A different and better world is possible; a world forever free of the threat of nuclear weapons.


Thank you.