Tonga

Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons

Nayarit, Mexico, February 14, 2014

The delegation of the Kingdom of Tonga conveys its sincere gratitude to the government and people of Mexico for organising this conference with the warm hospitality extended to us, and for its leadership in ensuring that we rid the whole world of the threat posed by nuclear weapons.

The Tongan delegation also thanks all the panellists for the informative and insightful presentations, which have highlighted very clearly the urgency of addressing this paramount threat. We thank the hibakusha for the personal testimonies which have underscored the need to redouble our efforts to ensure that no one else experiences their sufferings.

We also acknowledge the statement delivered by the distinguished senator of the Republic of Marshall Islands yesterday. We also associated ourselves with the joint statement which will be delivered by the representative from the Republic of Kiribati on behalf of the Pacific Island Forum countries.

Tonga is very much concerned about the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. History clearly provides evidence that the effects of use of nuclear weapons is destructive, immense and, worst of all, indiscriminate. As we all know, the humanitarian consequence respects no borders, and it is both international and transnational.

The Oslo Conference last year, in addition to that which we have heard thus far here in Nayarit, has again provided a deeper and greater synthesis for the world on this issue. The issue of nuclear disarmament is not new to Tonga, and my prime minister as with past prime ministers, has consistently joined other heads of states of governments of all Pacific Island regions to express collective desire for nuclear disarmament.

For instance, at the most recent annual meeting of the sixteen regional leaders of the Pacific Islands Forum, appropriately hosted by the Marshall Islands in 2013, the leaders confirmed the support for ongoing bilateral and multilateral efforts to assist the Marshall Islands effectively engage the United States, and to reach a resolution to the US nuclear testing program in the Marshal Islands.

The leaders have therefore considered submitting the letters to the United States government, urging that country to take action to meaningfully address the ongoing impacts resulting from this nuclear testing program, and also to the United Nations Secretary General to address the ongoing impacts of such testing in the Pacific Islands region.

We therefore join delegates in a concerted effort, inclusive of countries with nuclear weapons, to maintain and enhance the momentum to eliminate the threats of these weapons of mass destruction. We have witnessed again here in Nayarit these past couple of days a renewed resolve of the international community to address the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.
Raising awareness of this important issue, governments, together with non-government organisations and civil society, should effectively achieve this goal. Indeed, we owe it to ourselves and future generations. Finally we congratulate and thank Austria for hosting the third conference in September later this year.

God bless us all, and thank you.