Introductory remarks

International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

UN Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination, 15 June 2017

Madam President,

We thank you for presenting the first draft of what is sure to be a landmark international agreement – one that establishes the foundations for a more secure, harmonious world, forever free of the nuclear menace.

We are confident that – by working together in a spirit of cooperation, with determination, vigour and courage – negotiating states can achieve, by July 7, a strong, categorical ban on the ultimate weapons of mass destruction.

Anything less than a categorical ban would fail to meet the expectations of the world’s peoples, who yearn for, and have long championed, the total elimination of these abhorrent, immoral weapons.

The treaty text, we believe, must firmly convey our full and unequivocal rejection of nuclear weapons, and be rooted deeply in humanitarian principles. Safeguarding humanity, after all, is the treaty’s paramount objective.

Its prohibitions must properly capture all activities that might render our shared goal of nuclear disarmament more distant, or contribute in any way to preparations for the use of these patently unacceptable weapons.

Any states parties that possess nuclear weapons must agree to destroy their stockpiles in a time-bound, verifiable manner. And the treaty’s provisions on victim assistance and environmental remediation must meet prevailing standards.

Madam President,

We live in increasingly uncertain and dangerous times. The spectre of nuclear war looms large once more. Success in the weeks ahead is our only option. Public expectations are high. Citizens everywhere are watching, waiting, hoping.

We are convinced that this new global accord will prove transformative. Over the coming years, we will work tirelessly to promote its universalization and full implementation.

In the words of Setsuko Thurlow – a Hiroshima survivor and disarmament hero, who addressed this conference in March – the treaty can, and will, change the world.

Thank you.