Intervention by Peace Depot
UN Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination
New York, March 31, 2017

Thank you, Madam President.

Considering the devastating and inhuman nature of nuclear weapon detonation – as is proven through the experiences shared at this conference by Mr. Fujimori, Ms. Thurlow and Ms. Coleman-Haseldine – Peace Depot, a Japan-based NGO, fully supports an early conclusion of a legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. As distinguished delegates and civil society colleagues have stated repeatedly, now is the time to take a step forward and we should not lose momentum.

At the same time, Peace Depot believes it important to try to involve as many states as possible, in particular the nuclear-armed states and their allies, in the process and outcome of the negotiations. This is due to the undeniable fact that the achievement of our goal to abolish nuclear weapons would not be possible without the involvement of nuclear-armed states, in the end.

Madam President,

It may seem that an early de-legitimization of nuclear weapons and the involvement of states that are currently reluctant to or opposing prohibition, are incompatible with each other. In our view, they are not, and it would be worth the effort to seek institutional arrangements addressing them simultaneously. From that perspective, we propose, as a possible option, to negotiate the legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons as part of a larger framework on nuclear disarmament. Our proposal is formed into working paper A/CONF.229/2017/NGO/WP.7.

Under our proposal, the legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons is placed in a “Framework Agreement on Nuclear Disarmament” as a protocol. The main body of this “Framework Agreement” sets out legal obligations for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to which the nuclear-armed and nuclear reliant states are already committed politically. Also, there could be protocols on positive obligations, transparency and risk reduction measures, or possibly on elimination backed by verification. Each of the protocols, as well as the main body, shall set up their own individual conference of the parties. As for entry-into-force, different protocols can have different conditions. Our point is that, all these arrangements hopefully would enhance the involvement of states that are currently not ready to join provisions to prohibit nuclear weapons, while ensuring that the ban comes into effect at an early date.

Madam President,
I am aware that the above-mentioned idea of the entire “Framework Agreement” does not exactly fit into the scope of this conference, and I appreciate your generosity in giving me the chance to explain it despite that fact. My hope is that any of its elements or the underlying thoughts in our proposal would offer hints, in some way or other, in framing the institutional parts of the future prohibition treaty.

I am confident that this conference will create a strong and effective legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons leading towards their total elimination. And I believe that its strength and effectiveness depend highly upon whether this conference can work out institutional arrangements to enable the involvement of as many states as possible.

I thank you, Madam President.