Statement of the Pugwash Council
on the occasion of the 60th Pugwash Conference
6 November 2013
Istanbul, Turkey

Dialogue across Divides

Dialogue is as important in today’s international and regional security environments as it was at the height of the Cold War, when Pugwash paved the way for innovative and much-needed transnational dialogue. This fundamental need to talk across dividing lines remains intrinsic to both conflict prevention and conflict resolution, since even those conflicts that escalate to war ultimately must be solved at a negotiating table.

The dangerous reliance by some governments on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction continues to pose a grave threat to humanity. As the Pugwash pioneers asserted in their 1958 Vienna Declaration, “the risk of local conflicts growing into major wars is too great to be acceptable in the age of weapons of mass destruction.” Today, Pugwash reaffirms this warning and reasserts the importance of addressing threats to peace, security and stability in areas where nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction risks are present. This is an integral and urgent aspect of our continuing commitment to eliminate such weapons.

The challenges are daunting, but history has proven time and again that when the political will can be forged, technical solutions to arms control and disarmament can be found. Too often technological challenges are presented as roadblocks by those who seek to stall or divert attention from the underlying broader political and diplomatic challenges in finding cooperative solutions, based on the rule of law, respect for the UN Charter and human rights.

Current Challenges

We call urgently on all sides to make good use of the current window of opportunity to resolve the issues related to the Iranian nuclear controversy. A peaceful resolution of the
issue is essential not only for regional stability, but also to protect the future of the non-proliferation regime and the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We meet in the aftermath of the horrific use of chemical weapons in Syria. For decades Pugwash has worked to raise awareness of the threats posed by nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and long promoted those agreements and structures needed to verify their elimination from the world’s stockpiles. We believe non-proliferation and disarmament must be supported and expanded. We are pleased that the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has been honoured with the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize. We stand ready to continue to assist these efforts in whatever ways we can be useful. We hope that the accession of Syria to the Chemical Weapons Convention will be followed with increased efforts to negotiate an end to the devastating conflict.

A potential renaissance of nuclear energy would bring with it demanding tasks. The right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy should not further compound weapons proliferation risks, and international cooperation to reduce these concerns is a priority. Indeed, in the post-Fukushima era, it seems urgent for states to re-examine the reasons for nuclear energy and to explore other means of addressing energy needs.

Rising political instability in the Middle East, North Africa, and South-East Asia has increased the risks of inter-state and civil wars. Major threats to security stem from authoritarian non-inclusive governments, the absence of rule of law, rising sectarianism, extremism, and insufficient dialogue. Pugwash seeks to contribute to dialogue and the reduction of tensions in these regions.

Talks are underway between Israel and Palestine. It is time to end the occupation and attain a two-state solution. Unlocking Palestine and providing drastically needed improvements in the quality of life for the Palestinian people are a top priority.

The future stability of South and Western Asia relies on dialogue between all sides in the conflict, including Afghanistan and Pakistan, and is urgent given the planned US and coalition withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in 2014. Progress toward a resolution of the Kashmir dispute is urgently needed, as an integral aspect of creating a more stable
peace between India and Pakistan. Dialogue and improved communication is essential to decreasing tensions in the region, especially between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

In Northeast Asia, we support talks to reduce tensions on the peninsula, including resolution of issues related to the DPRK nuclear weapon programme.

**Quinquennial Goals**

On the occasion of this ‘quinquennial meeting,’ the Pugwash community reaffirms the priorities that will guide over the next five years its work for the elimination of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction:

- To decrease the risk that weapons of mass destruction might be used accidentally or intentionally;
- To promote conflict resolution in areas where weapons of mass destruction are or may be present;
- To prevent the further spread of weapons of mass destruction, and to universalize the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Chemical Weapons Convention, and the Biological Weapons Convention;
- To render universal the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty;
- To severely reduce the salience of nuclear weapons;
- To promote the conclusion of international agreements that reduce the dangers associated with weapons of mass destruction, including measures such as the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty and promoting WMD- or nuclear-weapon-free zones wherever possible, including in the Middle East;
- To promote nuclear disarmament of all states with nuclear weapons and a re-examination of outmoded deterrence doctrines, including establishing a norm that nuclear weapons should not be based on foreign soil, thus advocating the removal of forward-deployed tactical nuclear weapons from Europe;
- To find ways, measures and international agreements to prevent dangerous technological developments in the cybersphere and in the military domain. Globally accepted norms, principals and restraint to prevent the militarization and surveillance of cyberspace are necessary. International regulations for the protection of data and privacy are overdue.
To facilitate the above by promoting a proper understanding and addressing of regional dynamics and threat perceptions, as an essential aspect of peaceful conflict resolution.

Pugwash starts its twelfth Quinquennium by reaffirming the message of its founders in their aforementioned 1958 Vienna Declaration, “[We] appeal to all peoples and their governments to establish conditions of lasting and stable peace.” From Kashmir to Palestine and beyond, people must be able to exercise their basic rights to freedom of movement and interaction. The Cold War taught the world that dialogue across the divides is an essential element for progress on many fronts. Governments, international institutions and NGOs must all work together to provide creative opportunities in the Track 2, Track 1.5 and official discussions. Pugwash stands ready to assist in this urgent and important task.

Further Information

The Pugwash community greatly appreciated the opportunity to hold the 60th Pugwash Conference in Istanbul, coinciding with the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the founding of the Turkish Republic. Turkey stands at the crossroads of many of today’s most critical issues, and has demonstrated leadership in seeking to resolve some of the most intractable problems. The 60th Pugwash Conference brought together 285 people from more than 40 countries to discuss “Dialogue, Disarmament, and Regional and Global Security,” from 1-5 November 2013 in Istanbul, Turkey. A related meeting of the International Student/Young Pugwash network involved 26 students from 19 countries.

At this meeting a new Pugwash Council was elected with Prof. Saideh Lotfiyan (Iran) as chair, and a new Executive Committee appointed with Dr. Steve Miller (USA) as chair. In addition, Sandra Butcher was appointed Executive Director.

The meeting was made possible by the generous support of the Strategic Research Center of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Simons Foundation, Carnegie Corporation, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cyrus Eaton Foundation, Pugwash national groups, and other supporters.

For more information: www.pugwash.org