

The 62nd Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs

Astana Declaration of the Pugwash Council

“From Prohibition of Nuclear Testing toward Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons”

INTRODUCTION BY PAOLO COTTA RAMUSINO, SECRETARY GENERAL OF PUGWASH

Kazakhstan has been at the forefront of the campaign against nuclear weapons for quite some time. It suffered enormously from the nuclear testing conducted in the polygon of Semipalatinsk that was shut down by a crucial decision taken by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. He also made sure that all Soviet nuclear weapons were withdrawn from the country after 1992, as well taking leadership in the establishment of the Central Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone established in 2006. Pugwash is very grateful to Kazakhstan for having hosted our 62nd international conference and it is a great honor for me to thank the people of Kazakhstan, the Senate President Tokayev, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, and the President Nursultan Nazarbayev.

ASTANA DECLARATION

Since 1945, nuclear weapons testing has played a primary role in the horizontal and vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons. Such testing has also inflicted great damage on the environment and people, especially in areas adjacent to nuclear test ranges but also globally. The cumulative consequences of more than 2000 nuclear tests conducted since 1945 by nuclear weapons states can be compared to a slow-motion limited nuclear war, waged by them on themselves and on humankind.

One of the initiatives that changed the tide in the fight against nuclear weapons testing was at Semipalatinsk. The decision by Kazakhstan to permanently close the Soviet nuclear test site was promulgated on 29 August 1991. It became one of the significant factors that led to the moratorium on nuclear testing, followed by the successful negotiation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) in 1996. However, this treaty will only enter into force when eight key countries decide to adhere. We urge the DPRK, India and Pakistan to sign and ratify the treaty and also China, Egypt, Iran, Israel, and the USA to ratify it without delay.

For its part, Kazakhstan has been a strong supporter of this goal, including its joint-chairing with Japan of the conference for Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT for the past two years. The case of Kazakhstan is a powerful reminder of the importance of prohibiting nuclear tests, as well as of the humanitarian consequences that nuclear weapons entail, even when not used in war. Cancers of different types, leukemia, infertility, and genetic diseases due to nuclear weapons tests affect many people across the world. Furthermore, radiation damage to the genetic code continues to impact the second and even third generation of those exposed, and has had a devastating ecological impact on land, rivers, and agriculture.

It is more than seventy years since the first two nuclear explosions, when 170,000 people were killed and many more affected by the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Still, over 15,000 nuclear warheads continue to pose a threat to humanity. The plight and suffering of *Hibakusha* around the world, survivors of the legacy of nuclear weapons as well as testing, must jolt us from complacency to finally and comprehensively eliminate nuclear weapons. The

recently negotiated Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, agreed upon by 122 States and supported by global civil society, acknowledges the importance of reaching this goal.

While nuclear weapons exist, there remains the serious possibility that a nuclear weapon or device might be detonated. In the current international climate, there is a heightened risk that a conflict can escalate and nuclear dangers would risk spiraling out of control. The absolute imperative of avoiding any nuclear explosion, in any possible conflict or situation, must be emphasized.

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the first Pugwash Conference. The tragic results of the Castle Bravo hydrogen bomb test by the US in 1954 in the Marshall Islands led Joseph Rotblat to set in motion what has now become a truly global movement. Here in Astana, on the International Day against Nuclear Tests, and aware of Kazakhstan's important contributions to this cause, the Pugwash Council calls upon all Governments and the people of the world to reflect on the grave and irreversible ecological and humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and to spare no efforts towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.