



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Building political will and momentum for nuclear disarmament Framework Forum Geneva, 8th September

Office of the
Secretary General

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by commending the organizers of this Framework Forum Roundtable on building blocks and negotiations towards a nuclear weapons-free world. From the perspective of the IPU, as the world organization of national parliaments, we are convinced of the fact that this is an issue of crucial importance for all parliaments and parliamentarians – and that they can indeed play a major role in turning this vision into a palpable reality.

Throughout the 1990's, the issue of nuclear disarmament was discussed at the IPU through the prism of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. In 2009, IPU Members adopted a resolution entitled "**Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, and securing the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments**". The resolution contains an extensive array of recommendations for practical measures to be taken by parliaments to achieve this goal. Among others, to promote the UN Secretary-General's five-point proposal for nuclear disarmament and encourage negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear weapons agreement.

Since then, together with our partners at PNND, we have made steady efforts to keep this issue of our agenda and build greater awareness and support among MPs. IPU Assemblies over the past five years have regularly featured debates and review sessions on nuclear disarmament. The 2010 World Conference of Speakers of Parliament, held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, included an advance screening of "Countdown to Zero" and issued an outcome Declaration whereby parliamentary leaders pledged their support for the UN Secretary-General plan aimed at achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Based on the input from Members and the various good practices high-lighted in the course of their deliberations, a Handbook for Parliamentarians on supporting nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was produced in 2012. To date, the Handbook has been translated into half a dozen languages and is serving as a practical tool for parliaments and their specialized committees. Several ground-breaking debates have been held in national parliaments. From among these, we commend Jean-Marie Collin of PNND for breaking the taboo and bringing a frank discussion on nuclear doctrines to the French National Assembly.

A few months ago in March, the IPU adopted a new resolution entitled **Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: The contribution of parliaments**. In the lead up to the adoption of the resolution, two co-rapporteurs from Canada and Cuba - representing diametrically different political views – worked together in a pro-active and very constructive manner. Together, they arrived at a bold and forward-looking draft text which served as a solid basis for the resolution ultimately adopted by the full IPU membership. This in fact demonstrates the beauty of parliamentary diplomacy, while also highlighting the fact that it is possible for politicians to work together effectively in addressing critical issues.

The resolution focuses on the role parliamentarians can play to highlight the economic, environmental and humanitarian imperative to abolish nuclear weapons, eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in security policies and promote multilateral negotiations to achieve a safe and secure nuclear-weapons-free world. It also calls on all parliaments to promote and mark September 26th as the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

As is our practice, the resolution is circulated within the national parliaments and submitted to the attention of Governments. Several parliaments bring the resolutions for debate within the select parliamentary committees and examine modalities for implementation. There is a statutory obligation of annual reporting by Members, and we also count on engagement with various partners for follow up at the national and regional levels. Needless to say, throughout this process, cooperation between legislators, local officials, governments and civil society is critical to ensure success.

We will have an opportunity to examine follow-up to this Resolution in October, in the context of the 131st IPU Assembly, when together with PNND and the World Future Council we will be convening a parliamentary workshop to look at nuclear prohibition and divestment legislation, possibilities to phase out reliance on nuclear deterrence in favor of cooperative security mechanisms, as well as the role of parliamentarians in supporting multilateral nuclear disarmament efforts and initiatives. In particular, the workshop will also help shape parliamentary input to the forthcoming Vienna Conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

I will conclude by saying that at the IPU we will continue to do our utmost and work with our partners to keep this issue high on the IPU agenda, and help build the necessary political will and momentum towards the achievement of a world without nuclear weapons.

Thank you