The Holy See congratulates the Government of Mexico on holding the Second Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons and welcomes the invitation by Austria to organize the Third follow-up Conference.

For many years, the Holy See has called for the abolition of nuclear weapons in order that the world may be freed from the spectre of mass destruction. Today, we repeat that moral call to inspire and animate constructive work to preserve our planet and all humanity.

The doctrine of nuclear deterrence is the chief obstacle to meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament. This military doctrine is leading to the modernization of existing stocks of nuclear systems, thus preventing genuine nuclear disarmament. The catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, at the core of this conference, stem from the core problem of nuclear deterrence. This is the problem that must be dealt with, not only in words but action.

At the 2010 Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Holy See stated that the world has arrived at an opportune moment to begin addressing in a systematic way the legal, political and technical requisites for a nuclear weapons-free world. For this reason, preparatory work should begin, sooner than later, on a comprehensive agreement leading to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

After we have listened, in Oslo last year and now in Mexico, about the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and after we have been so moved by the testimonies of the Hibakusha, it is high time to ask ourselves a simple question: having identified all these convincing facts what to do next?

Let us use the momentum of this conference to launch a programme of action to begin the process of developing a global ethical norm and a legal ban on all nuclear weapons. All humanity will benefit from courageous action to move forward to rid the world of these inhumane weapons.