Youth Presentation

Prepared by an International Group of Young People

Mr. Chair and Delegates,

We, the youth, have the right to live in a world where the fragile security of our health, our food supply, and the integrity of our planet are not compromised by the existence of nuclear weapons.

Often, there is a general tone from the generations which have come before us, specifically those who are members of the nuclear weapon states' governments, that we, the youth, simply "do not understand" that nuclear weapons provide protection and security. To that, we say, "You're right."

We do not understand their outdated views and refusal to move beyond the status quo. We do not understand the concept of nuclear weapons providing protection when all they have achieved are humanitarian consequences so heinous, that the people of the world must live in fear of such a fate befalling them. We do not understand the benefit of perpetuating the existence of nuclear weapons, a creation of previous generations, whose only purpose is destruction and the instillation of fear. This is simply NOT security.

Mr. Chair and Delegates,

To live in a world with nuclear weapons is like living with an aggressor. They say they behave like this out of love to protect us. But this is untrue. Their sole motivation is the achievement of power and control gained psychologically through threats, physically through nuclear tests, and financially through the trillions of dollars spent maintaining and modernizing these weapons.

Some may argue it is impossible to live differently. Nothing else exists; nothing will ever change.

This is exactly the mentality that we must strive to change. How many other policy changes were also thought to be impossible and dangerous, yet succeeded, leading to the betterment of humanity? For instance, Costa Rica abolished its army in 1948. The abolishment of Costa Rica’s army has enabled it to find a diplomatic route to resolve its problems. As a result, this state refrains from threatening other states with force.

Mr. Chair and Delegates,

We, the youth, cannot understand why decision makers are investing in more nuclear weapons. Some of them claim that it is acceptable to stockpile nuclear weapons and invest huge resources into modernizing nuclear arsenals. Surely, these WMDs only escalate the likelihood of a nuclear attack.

Why should we, the youth, be shouldered with the burden of maintaining these nuclear weapons and witnessing the vast economic problems associated with shifting more and more expenditures to supporting them.
We are highly concerned about the persistent dangers with maintaining nuclear weapons on high alert. This current system endangers all of us. By maintaining them on this level, there is a possibility of human error and miscalculation that could cause grave consequences.

An increasing amount of states have come to realize that what lies behind nuclear weapons is power and control. The risk of humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons whether design, error, or nature, has a price that is too high for us to pay. The Red Cross Chapters and the Red Crescent Movements have already declared that there would be no real possibility of assisting the victims in the event of a nuclear detonation.

The Conferences in Oslo and Nayarit have been of enormous help in explaining the dangers of nuclear weapons. Hence, an ever-growing amount of states are joining in the call to ban nuclear weapons.

They understand that it is in the interest of humankind that nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances. The only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons will never be used again is through their total elimination.

Mr. Chair and Delegates,

We acknowledge the efforts in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and the gradual elimination of nuclear weapons. However, these efforts have not been successful because we are witnessing a situation in which states have refused to comply with their Article VI obligations, among other issues.

We can change the game, and what better opportunity than now? Next year, 70 years will have passed since the bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The NPT Review Conference will also occur in 2015. It is our hope that these occasions will inspire everyone to promote true and lasting change.

We would like to remind everyone that with public sentiment, nothing could fail; without it, nothing can succeed. And the public sentiment in favor of nuclear disarmament is ever growing; this is not a random event. For example, since 2010, 20 million petition signatures have been sent to the UN calling for a ban. In addition, the momentum has been growing amongst civil society and states alike as they have been examining and discussing the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Oslo, Nayarit, and soon-to-be Vienna.

Mr. Chair and Delegates,

What do we, the youth, want for our future? We want to live in peace, not turmoil. We want diplomacy, not threats. We want our resources to be used in health and education, not to be wasted on nuclear weapons.

What do we need from our decision makers? We need them to act now, to do the right thing. We need them to take responsibility and allow us and future generations to live and prosper.

And this is precisely where we, the youth, become a link.

It is our duty to continue to educate, to take action, and to inform. It is also our duty to call upon decision makers to set the stage for a more responsible dialogue. Our leaders should wake up from the Cold War ideology and face the realities of a modern political culture in the 21st Century.

The mistakes of the past may be the fault of those before us, but the future belongs to the youth, and now is the time to take charge of it. Now is the time to ban nuclear weapons.

Thank you.