Preambular Elements

UN Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons, Leading Towards Their Total Elimination

Delivered by Linnet Ngayu on 28 March 2017

Thank you, Madam President.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, ICAN, wishes to make the following recommendations for the preamble:

First and foremost, it must convey our deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons – and our determination, for the sake of all humankind, to eliminate these abhorrent, earth-destroying weapons forevermore.

It should stress the need to ensure the full realization of the rights of all victims of nuclear weapons, bearing in mind the sanctity and equity of all human life. We acknowledge the disproportionate and ongoing impact of the use, testing and development of nuclear weapons on women and girls and indigenous communities around the world.

It should underscore the need to rehabilitate, to the greatest extent possible, environments affected by nuclear weapons. The relationship between humanity and the environment is essential and interconnected for the sustenance of our common home.

It should emphasize that, in a world where basic human needs have not yet been met, the vast resources allocated to the production, modernization and maintenance of nuclear arsenals must be redirected towards human development and viable societies.

It should highlight the role of public conscience in furthering the principles of humanity, as evidenced by the global call of ICAN, the Red Cross and the world’s faiths for the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It should welcome the broad support for the international norms prohibiting other indiscriminate weapons, including biological and toxin weapons, chemical weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. It should reaffirm the applicability of international humanitarian law to the use of nuclear weapons.

Finally, it should reaffirm that there exists an obligation under international law to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In short, the preamble must convey our firm belief that these are wholly unacceptable and unethical weapons, given their indiscriminate nature, their inherent immorality and their potential to cause indiscriminate harm and annihilate humanity and the planet as a whole.