

*NGO PRESENTATION TO THE NPT REVIEW CONFERENCE PREPARATORY
COMMITTEE, NEW YORK, APRIL 2002*

INTER-RELELIGIOUS REPRESENTATIVES' PRESENTATION TO THE NPT
PREPCOM

SPEAKER: Arun P. Elhance; Director, Disarmament and Security World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)

We, the representatives of different world religious and faith communities, are united in reaffirming our complete and unconditional opposition to the development, testing, deployment, and threatened or actual use of nuclear weapons by any state or non-state actor(s). We strongly believe that nuclear weapons of all shapes and sizes violate the core spiritual and moral values embedded at the heart of every religion and faith. Such weapons also violate many accepted legal principles, including universality and equality. The adverse economic, environmental and health-related impacts of every activity associated with nuclear weapons are totally unacceptable to us. Furthermore, we do not believe that there are or can be any circumstances that can ever justify the use of nuclear weapons.

As representatives of religions and faiths, we are appalled at the spiritual and moral corruption and bankruptcy that are implied by and reflected in the efforts by some states to develop constituencies that would accept the use of nuclear weapons. We find it abhorring that while life on earth is already threatened with extinction by thousands of existing nuclear weapons and missiles, many on "hair trigger alert", new weapons are still being developed or are proposed to be developed and deployed. Such developments are particularly unacceptable in a world where billions of men, women and children have yet to taste any fruits of economic development and where a majority of the world's population struggles to survive day-by-day under inhumane conditions. We want to see all resources currently being wasted and planned to be spent on nuclear weapons to be diverted to address the urgent social, economic, environmental, and human security and human rights problems that we are confronted with as a world community.

On the occasion of the 2002 NPT PrepCom we strongly urge all member states of the United Nations to unconditionally and comprehensively abide by all the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), including the 13 practical steps for the systematic and progressive implementation of Article VI. We urge all states to work together to immediately freeze the development and deployment of nuclear weapons and to make an unequivocal commitment to the elimination of all existing nuclear weapons in the shortest possible time, not in some distant and indeterminate future. We further implore states to collectively find ways for disposing all existing nuclear materials and waste in an environmentally sound manner, and to develop and promote sustainable sources of energy to meet the current and future needs of all peoples.

From our side, we renew our commitment to devote the spiritual, moral, material and infrastructure resources of our organizations and communities to the service of NPT and the efforts of states and the United Nations to eliminate the threats posed by nuclear weapons, now and in the future. We commit ourselves to help materialize the positive powers of all religions and faiths to advocate for total nuclear disarmament at all levels, from local to global, at the earliest date. We pledge that through peace

education and advocacy we will inform our constituencies of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons as well as the benefits to be derived humanity from their elimination. We urge the United Nations and all specialized agencies, the member states and all concerned world citizens to work with us and to call upon us for support in realizing the dream of a nuclear-free world.

Humanity cannot wait for a major nuclear explosion or exchange, whether by design or accident, to be awakened to the horrors that such weapons threaten to unleash on our planet. Humanity must not be held hostage, now and in the future, by these indiscriminate weapons of mass destruction.

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