

Cluster 1: Preamble

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

Delivered by Linnet Ngayu, 16 June 2017

Madam President,

The preamble, we believe, must clearly convey the enormous and ever-increasing risk that nuclear weapons – through their very existence – pose to all humankind. This risk will remain until the weapons have been eradicated completely.

The preamble must, moreover, acknowledge the inability of the international community to render meaningful humanitarian relief in the aftermath of a nuclear detonation – a key conclusion of the three humanitarian conferences.

The draft language on the gendered impacts of nuclear explosions should be broadened to reflect more accurately recent research findings in this area. Such impacts have a social as well as physical dimension.

It is important, too, that the preamble recognize the disproportionate impact that nuclear testing has had, and continues to have, on indigenous communities around the world. Their lands, rivers and oceans have been poisoned, forever displacing them from their homes and disconnecting them from their traditional way of life.

States parties should resolve, in the preamble, to do their utmost to provide assistance to all victims of nuclear weapons, and to remediate all environments affected by the use, testing or development of nuclear weapons.

They should stress that, in a world where basic human needs have not yet been met, the vast resources allocated to the manufacture and modernization of nuclear arsenals must be redirected towards social and economic development.

They should welcome the broad support for the international norms prohibiting other indiscriminate weapons, including biological weapons, chemical weapons, anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions.

They should emphasize the desirability of attracting the adherence of all states to the treaty, and express their determination to work strenuously towards the promotion of its universalization and full implementation.

Above all else, we hope that the preamble will more powerfully convey to the world our collective, unequivocal rejection not only of the use of nuclear weapons, but also of their mere possession by any state.

These horrific weapons serve no legitimate purpose whatsoever – given their indiscriminate nature, inherent immorality and potential to annihilate humanity.

Thank you.