

**Caribbean Forum on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons  
June 19-20, 2019  
Georgetown, Guyana**

**Georgetown Statement**

**The TPNW and the Caribbean**

Representatives of Caribbean countries (Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, St-Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St-Vincent and the Grenadines, and Trinidad and Tobago) convened in Georgetown, Guyana on June 19-20, 2019 at the invitation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Guyana and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) to discuss the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) to take stock of the Treaty from a regional perspective, to assess its prospects for advancing nuclear disarmament, global security and humanitarian norms, and to canvass progress toward its entry into force.

The Caribbean Forum on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons took place at a time of heightened risks of use of nuclear weapons – the highest since the Cold War. Indeed, rising tensions, the modernization of nuclear arsenals, the continued reliance on nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security concepts as well as on high alert postures, and threats regarding the possible use of nuclear weapons are widely seen as increasing the risk of a deliberate or accidental nuclear detonation.

Meanwhile, the slow pace of progress toward a nuclear weapon-free world, the continued lack of implementation of nuclear disarmament obligation, notably Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and other agreed steps and actions on nuclear disarmament remain a cause of concern in the region and globally.

Any use of nuclear weapons would have catastrophic humanitarian consequences. Nuclear weapons have the potential to cause destruction, death and displacement on a global scale, threatening the very survival of humanity. The effects of any nuclear detonation cannot be constrained by national borders, and will, if used again, have a profound impact on States far beyond the targeted areas, including those belonging to nuclear-weapon-free zones. Nuclear weapons cause long-term, severe and widespread damage to the environment, the climate, human health and well-being, socio-economic development and the social order. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continues to stress that no adequate humanitarian response would be possible in the aftermath of a nuclear attack.

In view of the catastrophic consequences any use of nuclear weapons anywhere would have, *all* regions and peoples have a stake in international security and an important part to play in efforts to advance international humanitarian law and the elimination of *all* weapons of mass destruction.

Member States of CARICOM have always been a strong proponent of multilateralism, with a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and have long advocated for a holistic approach to addressing matters of peace and security, recognizing fully the intrinsic link between peace, security and development. It was re-emphasized that there cannot be development without peace, while peace is the precondition to development. Based on their principled position, CARICOM was very active in the “Humanitarian Initiative on Nuclear Weapons” and was the first region to equate

humanitarian consequences with the need for a prohibition treaty. Caribbean States continued to be a leading voice in the negotiating process which resulted in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) on 7 July 2017 – the first global, legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons.

The TPNW was recognized as a historic achievement, to which countries of the region contributed. They were among the first to sign and ratify the Treaty. To date, two CARICOM Member States have ratified the TPNW (Guyana and Saint-Lucia), and three others have signed it (Antigua and Barbuda, Jamaica, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines). Participants acknowledged the important role the region has to play by joining the Treaty and contribute to its early entry into force and universal adherence.

The need for a clear and coordinated regional strategy once the treaty comes into effect was also identified. Participants further expressed the need of remaining engaged including by having a follow-up meeting on these issues including negotiators and experts.

The Forum reiterated the clear moral and humanitarian rationale as the *raison d'être* of the Treaty, and reaffirmed the significance of peace and disarmament education, victim assistance and environmental remediation. Participants expressed interest in more knowledge-sharing and capacity-building on these areas, as well as other obligations including how the TPNW relates to non-state actors. Additionally, participants acknowledged that taking a holistic approach to disarmament is enriched when gender and racial analyses are incorporated, as this helps unveil deep rooted structures of power, dominance and privilege that lies at the heart of nuclear weapons and their proliferation.

No CARICOM State possesses nuclear weapons or claims to be protected by the nuclear weapons of an ally, meaning that all CARICOM States are in full compliance with the prohibitions contained in Article 1 of the TPNW. It was noted that the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco Treaty) of 1967, which establishes Latin America and the Caribbean as an internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zone, contains similar prohibitions to those contained in the TPNW. Thus, signature and ratification of the TPNW by any State party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco should not present any challenges in terms of national implementation. The TPNW aims to transform the regional norm against the possession of nuclear weapons into a global norm.

Participants observed that the TPNW is fully compatible with and complementary to the 1968 NPT, and acknowledged the value of the TPNW's unambiguous prohibition of nuclear weapons to advance disarmament and reduce the incentive for proliferation.

The TPNW, and efforts to advance nuclear disarmament, support progress in attainment of the UN's 2030 Development Agenda, including Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The current expenditure on nuclear weapons by nuclear-armed states — approximately US\$2 trillion over the coming decades — reduces funding for development and achievement of the SDGs.

### **Next Steps on the TPNW**

The TPNW will enter into force once 50 states have ratified or acceded to it. Caribbean states have to maintain the leadership role they played in the negotiation with action by adding their voice, their vote and their signature and/or ratification to the global effort to strengthen the norm against these inhumane weapons and to increase their stigmatization. In order to do so, the need to deepen cooperation and collaboration among CARICOM member states on the issue was identified.

Participants expressed their strong support for achieving the swift entry into force of the TPNW as a vital step towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons and agreed to work toward signature and ratification (as applicable) of the Treaty. The Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies in the region, as well as the ICRC and ICAN stand ready to support this effort. A high-level ceremony will take place in New York on 26 September, 2019 for further signatures and ratifications of the Treaty, at the occasion of the UN International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The UN High Level Political Forum on the SDGs, to be held in New York on 9-18 July, 2019, and the three-day ministerial meeting in particular, was identified as another opportunity to sign or ratify. It was also observed that those States wishing to participate in the ceremony should notify the UN Office of Legal Affairs.

Participants were also encouraged to make use of the existing assistance tools including the Signature and Ratification Kit for the Treaty published by the ICRC as well as the Information Kit on Signature and Ratification published by the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs (ODA) and the UN Office of Legal Affairs (OLA).

Participants agreed to stay in close touch in the lead-up to entry into force of the TPNW and beyond to continue to engage actively, including in all appropriate regional contexts; In particular, participants asked Guyana to put a call to sign and ratify the TPNW on the agenda of the next CARICOM meeting.

Participants expressed their appreciation to the Government of Guyana and ICAN for co-hosting and organizing this Forum.

20 June 2019  
Georgetown, Guyana