



Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

WE CAN ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS!

Most other governments are already working toward nuclear abolition within the United Nations. Since 1999 the United States has been the major block to forward progress. Members of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom have long believed that nuclear weapon abolition is in the best interest of the United States, as well as the rest of the world. Now that there are some positive shifts in U.S. nuclear policies, we must open dialogue in Congress and in our communities, including among the skeptical and disbelieving.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon clearly outlined steps toward nuclear abolition in a speech to the East West Institute just before the 2008 U.S. elections. (10/24/08). Quotes from the speech are in bold italics below. You can read the entire speech, which includes much more important detail, at http://www.un.org/apps/news/infocus/speeches/statments_full.asp?statID=351 .

First, I urge all NPT parties, in particular the nuclear-weapon-states, to fulfill their obligation under the treaty to undertake negotiations on effective measures leading to nuclear disarmament.

WILPF believes the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), with all its weaknesses, is our best first step toward abolition and we can build on it to achieve nuclear disarmament. Of course nuclear disarmament must be global with strict monitoring and inspection, and with all states – both nuclear and non-nuclear - participating. UN membership is now virtually universal. Of the 194 UN members, only four are not yet party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: Israel, North Korea, India and Pakistan. A major task for the United States now will be to participate actively in drawing these four governments into joining the NPT and into negotiations on nuclear abolition. Our WILPF task is to build support in the U.S.

WILPF coordinates NGO participation at the NPT and will report extensively on the May 4 to 15 2009 Prep Com. Follow the sessions and NGO programs at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/2009index.html> .

1) *They could pursue this goal by agreement on a framework of separate, mutually reinforcing instruments.*

WILPF welcomed and still supports this framework which consists of thirteen practical steps agreed on unanimously in 2000 by all 187 nations then party to the treaty, including the United States. Steps include the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, a verifiable fissile materials ban, no new production and disassembly of existing nukes under strict inspection and verification. Read a brief summary of the 13 steps at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/13point.html> .

In 2000 a new government was elected in the US which rejected most of the thirteen steps as “not in the U.S. interest.” Although this stopped all progress in negotiations, other UN members have found ways to continue discussing the 13 steps in preparation for the day when the U.S. might again be willing to join the effort and allow forward movement in negotiations.

2) *Or they could consider negotiating a nuclear-weapons convention, backed by a strong system of verification, as has long been proposed at the United Nations. Upon the request of Costa Rica and Malaysia, I have circulated to all UN member states a draft of such a convention, which offers a good point of departure. WILPF points out* that this model treaty, initiated by the [International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War](http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/13point.html), was drafted by lawyers, physicians, and other experts from civil society. WILPF is a partner in this effort and members helped draft the original model treaty, which was first presented to the United Nations in 1997 by Costa Rica and Malaysia. An updated and revised version was presented and accepted by the UN in 2007. 127

governments voted for immediate commencement of negotiations on such a treaty. Access the model treaty and the campaign to promote it at <http://www.icanw.org/nuclear-weapons-convention> .

3) *The nuclear powers should actively engage with other states on this issue at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, the world's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum.*

WILPF believes the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has the potential for great work in negotiating disarmament treaties. The WILPF CD handbook is at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/cd/cdbook2009.pdf>

The CD's rules indicate that all decisions must be made by consensus. Because some states, including the United States, Pakistan, China, and Iran, have opposing views on how to move forward, the CD has not agreed on a work agenda for a decade.

WILPF hopes for a more positive leadership role from the new U.S. administration. WILPF is now the only civil society organization reporting on all sessions of the CD. Follow the action and statements of governments at <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/cd/cdindex.html> . We hope for and will support a positive shift in U.S. nuclear policies.

4) *The world would also welcome a resumption of bilateral negotiations between the United States and Russian Federation aimed at deep and verifiable reductions of their respective arsenals.*

WILPF welcomes resumption of negotiations of a new version of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) as has already been agreed upon between Russia and the U.S. We urge inspection, verification, dismantlement and irreversibility. See <http://www.armscontrol.org/node/2493> for more information.

5) *Governments should also invest more in verification research and development. The United Kingdom's proposal to host a conference of nuclear-weapon states on verification is a concrete step in the right direction.*

WILPF agrees that this is a good step and welcomes any initiatives from Britain. However, UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown also speaks of the need for large investments in nuclear power – something with which WILPF does not agree.

Our own emphasis is on nuclear weapons abolition as a step toward general and complete disarmament. However many of members are or have been involved in resistance to nuclear power. For basic discussion of dangers of nuclear power explore the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research website (<http://www.ieer.org>). WILPF member and former RCW program associate is now outreach coordinator for the Nuclear Free, Carbon Free campaign. (I think this paragraph should go at the end)

The UN Secretary General goes on to elaborate on these points. He calls for ratification of the CTBT by all states with nuclear weapons or nuclear facilities, for a fissile materials treaty, for the rule of international law and the further spread of nuclear free zones, including in the Middle East. He calls for transparency and accountability, for progress on other disarmament issues including missiles and space weapons. He suggests the UN might proceed with the World summit on Disarmament recommended by the Blix commission. **WILPF supports and works for all such measures. WILPF also believes we must work on a faster track, as urged by Mayors for Peace and many of our partner NGOS. We seek a Nuclear Free World by 2020! 75 years of nuclear terror is long enough!**
