

## Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons

September 26, 2014

The Right Honourable Stephen Harper  
Prime Minister  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

Dear Sir:

### **RE: Call for a Nuclear Weapons Convention**

We, the groups listed below, request your urgent support for the negotiation of a Nuclear Weapons Convention. Canada is obligated through the Non-Proliferation Treaty ("NPT") to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race...". This obligation has been confirmed by the International Court of Justice and re-affirmed in NPT Review Conferences.

We are grateful for the reduction in numbers of nuclear weapons and with the good work being done by the IAEA to verify and secure nuclear materials and technologies. But we are concerned with the remaining 16,300 nuclear weapons knowing that they present a daily risk of their explosive use should human or computer error occur. In the event of such use, the results could be catastrophic for human civilization and our environment. Even a small exchange of perhaps 100 warheads could trigger a nuclear famine, threatening global food supplies.

We note with gratitude Canada's support for the Inter-Parliamentary Union's landmark resolution that calls on parliaments to "work with their governments on eliminating the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines" and to "urge their governments to start negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention or package of agreements to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world." We are also grateful for the adoption in 2010 in both the Senate and House of Commons of the unanimous motion "endorses[ing] the 2008 five point plan for nuclear disarmament of Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations and encourag[ing] the Government of Canada to engage in negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention" and "to deploy a major world-wide Canadian diplomatic initiative in support of preventing nuclear proliferation and increasing the rate of nuclear disarmament".

We call upon the Government of Canada to:

- 1) signal to other states Canada's support for the start of negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention ("NWC") or an equivalent framework of agreements
- 2) call upon the U.S. and Russia to reduce the alert status of their nuclear weapons; and
- 3) to publicly request all NATO states to define specific steps NATO states will take to comply with their obligations under the NPT regime:
  - \* to diminish the role of nuclear weapons in their doctrines and policies

- \* to end deployment of nuclear weapons in NATO states that are Non-Nuclear Weapons States; and
- \* to negotiate the elimination of nuclear weapons.

With respect to 1) above, we believe that these negotiations **need NOT await the conclusion of the Fissile Materials Treaty**. Thus, the negotiating process need not be “step by step” within the Conference of Disarmament (CD). The history of the “steps” reveals an incredibly slow process, (NPT 1970, CTBT - 1996, with no negotiations in the CD toward nuclear disarmament since then). This is an inadequate response to the extreme threat posed to the global population by existing nuclear weapons. Noting Canada’s success in creating the expert group on the Fissile Materials Treaty, **we call for the establishment by the UN General Assembly of an *ad hoc* committee to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention and hasten the reduction of these weapons.**

Surely the elimination of this extraordinary threat is the most important task of the next decade and a worthy legacy for your office and for humanity.

Sincerely yours,

Beverley J. Tollefson Delong  
Chairperson

The following groups have endorsed this letter:

Les Artistes pour la Paix

B.C. Southern Interior Peace Coalition

Boundary Peace Initiative

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment/ Association Canadienne des Médecins pour l’Environnement

Canadian Environmental Law Association/ l’Association canadienne du droit de l’environnement

Canadian Pugwash Group, Board of Directors /les Conférences Pugwash Canada, Conseil d’administration

Canadian Voice of Women for Peace/La Voix des Femmes

Denman Island Peace Group

Group of 78 / Le Groupe de 78

Pacific Peace Working Group

Project Ploughshares

Religions for Peace Canada

Religions pour la paix Québec

Physicians for Global Survival / Médecins pour la Survie Mondiale

Saskatoon Peace Coalition

Science for Peace

The Simons Foundation

The Sisters of Service of Canada

United Nations Association - Canada/ Association canadienne pour les Nations Unies

Veterans Against Nuclear Arms (Ont./Qué.)

World Federalist Movement - Canada/ Mouvement Fédéraliste Mondial - Canada