



Statement of the Workshop on Less Nuclear Stocks and More Development



The long-standing hopes for a world without nuclear weapons merits our renewed efforts. These hopes are embodied in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and in the declarations of this Church and other groups around the world. We stand at the threshold of a new era of Sustainable Development, with new goals to end poverty, promote social inclusion, and protect the environment. Such hopes will be realized only in an era of true peace, and peace cannot be secure until the world moves to the elimination of nuclear weapons that threaten our very survival. The geopolitical situation is complex, with great risks but also real possibilities for progress towards a world of zero nuclear weapons. The idea of complete denuclearization was once seen as the domain only of dreamers and idealists. Yet today it is the position of world-leading practitioners of international statecraft, including many current and former heads of state that participate in the Global Zero campaign. A series of US-Russian treaties, including the New Start Treaty, will soon reduce the stocks of the US and Russia to 1,550 deployed systems, marking dramatic reductions in nuclear stockpiles from the peak levels of both countries. Other nuclear powers, including the United Kingdom, France, and China, are also moving towards reductions of their own nuclear stockpiles.

On the other emerging global risks are equally dramatic, both regarding nuclear proliferation and geopolitical conditions more generally. Four nuclear powers are currently outside of the NPT framework entirely (Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India, Israel, and Pakistan) and many countries allege that Iran is also illegally pursuing a nuclear-weapons capacity contrary to its NPT responsibilities, a charge that Iran denies.

Perhaps just as dangerous, the geopolitical tensions involving the nuclear powers are rising, not

diminishing. The US and European Union are in a tense confrontation with Russia over developments in the Ukraine, a confrontation so heated that a statesman no less than Mikhail Gorbachev has warned of a new Cold War. Tensions between Israel and its neighbors have worsened as well, especially following the recent Gaza War. The Middle East faces rising bloodshed and diplomatic confrontations in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and beyond. Iran and the Arab countries seem to be caught in an upward spiral of threats and recrimination, as well as proxy wars in Iraq and Syria. Tensions between India and Pakistan remain fraught, as do relations on the Korean Peninsula.

The challenges are further complicated by the inherent ambiguities and tensions that link nuclear arms and nuclear energy. On the one hand, the NPT envisions the availability of nuclear energy for every nation. The imperative of decarbonizing the world energy system in order to protect the global climate makes the deployment of nuclear energy more attractive for many countries, notably in Asia and the Middle East. Yet nuclear power opens more opportunities for secret arms programs, proliferation of fissile materials, and even the theft of such materials by terrorists.

In view of the highly complex interconnections among deterrence, proliferation, geopolitics, and peacetime nuclear energy needs, it is not surprising that the path to denuclearization currently seems blocked on many fronts. Regional and global tensions, hot wars involving the nuclear powers on one side or the other, and the heated arguments over potential military uses of peacetime nuclear power, all would seem to put deep denuclearization on the back burner or to render it impossible entirely. Yet these very same tensions and ambiguities raise the global stakes for establishing a path and timetable to eliminate nuclear weapons even more essential.

In the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* a half-century ago, His Holiness Pope John XXIII made clear that the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons depends most fundamentally on a global interstate order founded on universal morality:

All must realize that there is no hope of putting an end to the building up of armaments, nor of reducing the present stocks, nor, still less—and this is the main point—of abolishing them altogether, unless the process is complete and thorough and unless it proceeds from inner conviction: unless, that is, everyone sincerely cooperated to banish the fear and anxious expectation of war with which men are oppressed. If this is to come about, the fundamental principle on which our present peace depends must be replaced by another, which declares that the true and solid peace of nations consists not in equality of arms but in mutual trust alone. We believe that this can be brought to pass, and we consider that, since it concerns a matter not only demanded by right reason but also eminently desirable in itself, it will prove to be the source of many benefits. (paragraph 113)

This puts before us the need to address not only the crucial issues of deterrence regimes, treaty design, and verification rules, all of which are critically important to be sure, but also to reinforce the moral framework of global politics itself. The new era of sustainable development can give us guidance and a measure of confidence as well.

The world faces unprecedented challenges of extreme poverty, social exclusion, and possible environmental catastrophe. To address these interconnected crises – economic, social, and environmental – the world community has adopted the concept of sustainable development as the

organizing principle for the post-2015 global development. Moreover, the world community is on the verge of adopting three crucial agreements in 2015. In July 2015 (in Addis Ababa), the UN member states will agree on a new framework for Financing for Sustainable Development. In September 2015 (at the United Nations), the UN member states will adopt a set of Sustainable Development Goals to 2030, to help guide actions from the local to global scales. In December 2015 (in Paris), the UN member states will intend to adopt a new framework to limit human-induced climate change in order to avoid “dangerous interference in the climate system.”

The quest for zero nuclear arms can and should be reinforced in the context of sustainable development. Sustainable Development is about human survival and wellbeing, and nuclear disarmament is surely amongst the very highest priorities to secure that survival. The UN member states can therefore reinforce the priority of zero nuclear arms within the context of the new SDGs, which will include the goal of achieving “peaceful and inclusive societies” and “global partnerships for sustainable development.”

Denuclearization, and disarmament more generally, can deliver massive savings in budget outlays that may be urgently redirected towards economic and social objectives. Total military spending is currently around \$1.7 trillion per year, most of which is in the high-income countries. Even a ten-percent reduction of such spending would enable a doubling of global official development assistance that could be directed to universal health coverage, disease control, food security, and access to safe water and sanitation. Isaiah’s ancient command to beat swords to plowshares is now practicable and at hand, with “plowshare” institutions such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria able to translate increased funds directly into lives saved.

Yet none of this is possible in a world of growing tensions. The wars in Ukraine, Syria, Iraq, Libya, and beyond are not merely local tragedies, though they are certainly that. These wars are also catastrophic destroyers of global trust. They may lead non-nuclear countries to believe that nuclear weapons are key for the own survival; they may poison the atmosphere of trust needed for the US and Russia to cut nuclear weapons below the 1,550 target of the New Start Treaty; they may fracture the multilateral UN institutions vital for guiding any process towards the zero goal. For this reason, we must also heed the wisdom of Pope John XXIII when he observed that the United Nations stands as a unique world authority to promote global peace and human dignity: It is therefore our ardent desire that the United Nations Organization—in its structure and in its means—may become ever more equal to the magnitude and nobility of its tasks, and may the time come as quickly as possible when every human being will find therein an effective safeguard for the rights which derive directly from his dignity as a person, and which are therefore universal, inviolable and inalienable rights. (paragraph 145)

In our time, this means that the solutions to the crises in Syria, Iraq, Libya, Ukraine and other countries must not be supposed to lie not on the battlefield, but in the UN Security Council and in the political processes that the UN alone can oversee with global legitimacy. Unless we adhere to the standards of international law in the governance of peace and the restraint of violence, that is, unless we adhere to the UN Charter and especially Chapter VII, our hopes and aspirations for sustainable development may come to naught.

In 1963, at the height of the Cold War, US President John F. Kennedy, and Soviet Chairman Nikita

Khrushchev found their way to a first step towards peace, in the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. It was an accomplishment as unexpected as it was invaluable, in forging the way to the Non-Proliferation Treaty five years later, and therefore to the hopes for a world without nuclear weapons. They were inspired and guided in their quest by the message and prayers of Pope John XXIII and the lasting words of *Pacem in Terris*, which insisted on the moral code to guide international relations.

In the midst of that quest for peace, President Kennedy noted that as hard as it was to pursue peace, and much as it was viewed as “impossible” and “unreal,” it was possible precisely because peace is a human right, and a shared objective of all human beings. We are wise to listen to JFK’s famous words of hope on the possibility of achieving peace even with one’s staunch adversaries. “Let us not be blind to our differences,” said President Kennedy, but let us also direct attention to our common interests and the means by which those differences can be resolved. And if we cannot end now our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity. For in the final analysis, our most basic common link is that we all inhabit this small planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children’s futures. And we are all mortal.