

# International Women's Day Disarmament Seminar

Uranium



## Enrichment to Depletion

**8 March 2006**  
**Salle V, Palais des Nations, Geneva**

**Organized by the NGO Working Group on Peace,**  
*part of the NGO Committee on the Status of Women*

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## 1. Introduction

International Women's Day, 8 March, is a day to remember the story of ordinary women as active makers of history, a role of women too often forgotten or ignored. The celebration of this day is rooted in women's centuries-long struggle to participate in society as equals and to promote the values of peace and justice. Through the years, International Women's Day has become a day to reflect on progress made, to call for change, and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of women's rights.

The idea of an International Women's Day was initiated in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – a period which, in the industrialized world, was characterized by quick expansion and turbulence, booming population growth, and radical ideologies. In 1909, the first National Women's Day was observed in the United States, a practice that quickly was accepted by women in Europe. Throughout years of conflict, European women continued to unite to protest the war and express solidarity with their sisters. In 1917, at the end of World War I with 2 million Russian soldiers dead, women of Russia chose the last Sunday in February to strike for “bread and peace”. The timing of the strike was met by political opposition, but nevertheless the women carried out their protest. Four days later, the Czar was forced to abdicate, and women were granted the right to vote. That historic Sunday fell on February 23 on the Julian calendar then used in Russia but was March 8 on the Gregorian calendar in use elsewhere.

Since those early years, International Women's Day has assumed a new global significance for women in developed and developing countries alike, and March 8 is continuously marked by events to promote gender equality and peace.

Every year since 1984, the NGO community in Geneva has organized a seminar on the occasion of International Women's Day, on issues relating to gender, peace and disarmament. Throughout the years, this seminar has offered an opportunity for representatives from a wide range of civil society to come together and share ideas, support each other, and find innovative ways to move forwards towards the ultimate goal of sustainable and positive world peace.

The International Women's Day Seminar of 2006 was co-convened by the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and Femmes Africa Solidarité; with a focus on the issue of uranium – from depleted uranium (DU) to Fissile Materials. Seminar speakers filled in background information concerning the definition of uranium, its development into fissile material, the definition of depleted uranium, its uses, and its negative health effects. The seminar also investigated possible ways forward. The importance of negotiating a Fissile Materials Treaty in the Conference on Disarmament was elaborated, the possibility of a treaty banning the use of depleted uranium as a weapon, and grassroots movements to enact change also explored.

Participants from forty countries representing NGOs and governments attended the seminar. This report compiles the presentations given at the seminar; and summarizes the discussions that followed.

## **2. Welcome Speech**

**Alexandra Sundberg, Disarmament Intern,  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished delegates,

We are very happy to see all of you here today at this seminar on the occasion of International Women's Day. I'm glad that so many NGO representatives are here from so many different fields of peace work. And I'm also really happy to notice that a few diplomats decided to participate, even though the timing was bad for you with a lot of other events happening. Thank you all for coming!

This annual seminar isn't exactly a new tradition. For more than twenty years, the NGO community has organized a seminar here in Geneva on different topics related to gender and disarmament issues on International Women's Day.

And for more than twenty years, a statement based on this seminar has been delivered to the Conference on Disarmament. In that way, the world's sole multilateral body mandated to negotiate disarmament and arms control treaties has been able to hear the voices of women - and of civil society - on disarmament and peace. Traditionally, our statement has been read out to the Conference by a member of the Secretariat. Last year, it was read out by then President Tim Caughley of New Zealand. This year, we are still waiting to hear if possibly, maybe we could be allowed to deliver our own statement. And until we know how this will turn out, we will stay optimistic. Because that's what NGO's are really good at, isn't it: Optimism. What else would keep us working for a better future in a world that, at bad days, just seems to be moving further and further away from the peace we want so badly?

This year's seminar will focus on uranium. The morning session will give us basic knowledge on the issue – all the way from depleted uranium to fissile materials. Susi Snyder, Secretary General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, will make sure we all know what we are dealing with. In the afternoon, we'll move on to discuss what can actually be done about it, both on the governmental and civil society levels. Jennifer Nordstrom, project associate of WILPF's Reaching Critical Will project in New York, is going to guide us through the diplomatic side of the story, while Rae Street of Campaign against Depleted Uranium and Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament will talk about grassroots action on these issues.

We have tried to keep the list of speakers short, since we really don't want to make this another seminar with experts giving technical presentations that too often leave us with more questions than answers, and no time to talk about what has actually been said. Instead, we hope there will be enough time for everyone's questions and for interactive and stimulating discussions.

On the practical side of things, we'll be breaking for lunch around 12:30, and resuming the afternoon session at 3:00 pm. When we leave from here around 5:30, I hope we all can feel that we have learned a lot of new things and gained a lot of new energy to keep up our work for peace on earth.

Once again, thank you all for coming. It's really nice seeing so many of you here on this disarmament seminar to mark International Women's Day!

### 3. Uranium – Bomb Building Basics

Susi Snyder, Secretary-General,  
Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Ladies and Gentlemen,

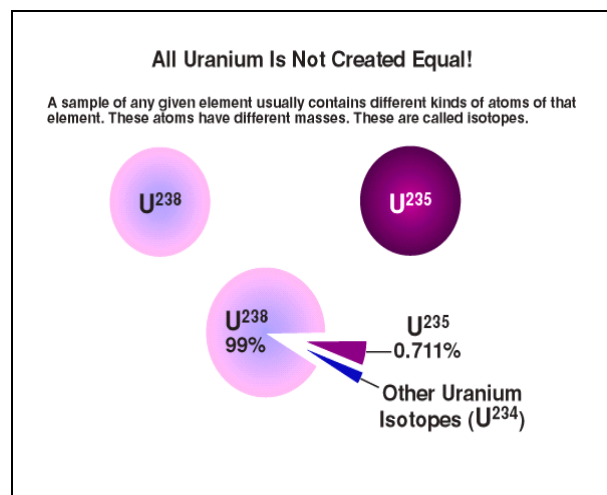
I'm happy to be sitting here with you today. Happy International Women's Day. A day that has been used since 1909 by women to demand equal engagement in politics. A day that women have used as a focal point to demonstrate their contributions to local, national, and international issues of importance. I would like to take a moment to remember one of my heroes in international security and nuclear debates from the past- Inga Thorsson, who, as chair of the first NPT Review Conference maintained a belief that nuclear disarmament was not only feasible but was absolutely necessary. It still is.

One of the recognized steps to get towards nuclear disarmament is a fissile materials treaty. In fact, this was the agreed "3rd Step" in the 13 practical steps of the 2000 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference outcome document. So what are fissile materials?

Fissile materials are composed of atoms that can be split by neutrons in a self-sustaining chain-reaction to release enormous amounts of energy. In nuclear reactors, the fission process is controlled, and the energy is harnessed to produce electricity. In nuclear weapons, the fission energy is released all at once to produce a violent explosion. The most important fissile materials for nuclear energy and nuclear weapons are an isotope of plutonium, plutonium-239, and an isotope of uranium, uranium-235. Uranium-235 occurs in nature. For all practical purposes, plutonium-239 does not.

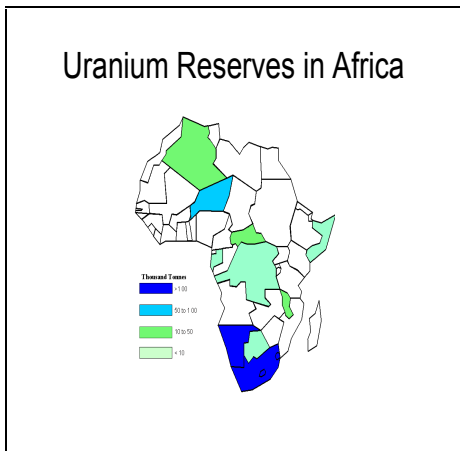
Today I'll talk about uranium, the only naturally occurring fissile material on earth, and the substance needed in order to create the other recognized fissile material- plutonium.

First discovered in the 18th century, uranium is an element found everywhere on earth, mainly in trace quantities. In 1938, German physicists Otto Hahn and Fritz Strassmann showed that uranium could be split into parts to yield energy. Uranium is the principal fuel for nuclear reactors and the main raw material for nuclear weapons. It was the fissile material in the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945.



Nuclear bombs cannot be made from natural or low enriched uranium. Uranium must have a minimum of 20 per cent of U-235 in it in order to be useful for a nuclear bomb. In practice, because a 20% U 235 bomb would be too heavy and require too much conventional explosive to make it reach a critical chain reaction, uranium containing at least 90 per cent U-235 has been used to make nuclear weapons. Material with this level of enrichment is called highly enriched uranium or HEU. As an example, the bomb dropped on Hiroshima was made with

about 60 kilograms of HEU. HEU is also used in research reactors and naval reactors; the HEU for research reactors is considered particularly vulnerable to diversion for use in nuclear weapons.



There are uranium mines located throughout the world, and on every continent. The top uranium producers however are Australia, Canada, China, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Niger, Russia, and Uzbekistan.

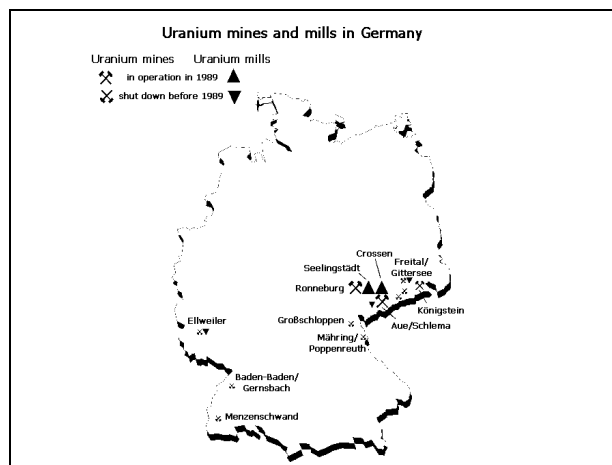
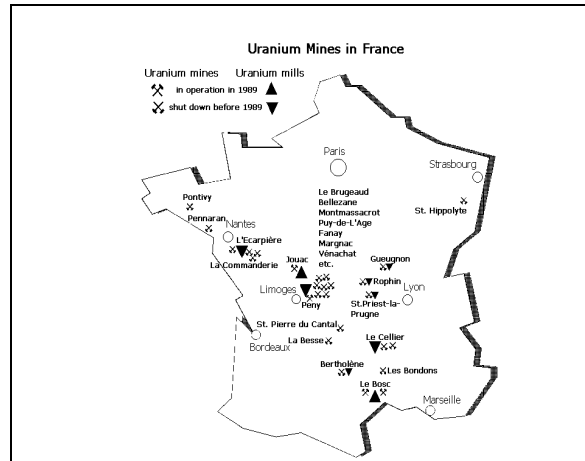
These producers all use similar methods to extract the uranium from the ground. Traditional mining techniques of drilling and blasting are used, in either open pits or underground mines. Because uranium is found in such low concentrations, huge amounts of rock must be mined. For example, Olympic Dam (Australia) has an ore grade of 0.05%. That means for every tonne mined, 5kg of uranium is retrieved. Huge volumes of waste rock are therefore generated. 'Waste' rock, is stored in waste stockpiles, and often used after mining has finished to cover more dangerous wastes buried in the original pits. In some parts of the world, uranium is leached out of the ground by injecting strong acid or alkaline solutions into the groundwater, a process known as In-Situ Leach (ISL) or solution mining.

Uranium needs to go through a complex milling process to extract it from the host rock before it can be sold in a form known as yellowcake, chemical symbol U<sub>3</sub>O<sub>8</sub>.

Mining and milling operations have disproportionately affected indigenous/ aboriginal populations around the globe. Nearly one third of all mill tailings from abandoned mill operations are on lands of the Navajo nation alone. Many Native Americans have died of lung cancers linked to their work in uranium mines. Others continue to suffer the effects of land and water contamination due to seepage and spills from tailings piles.

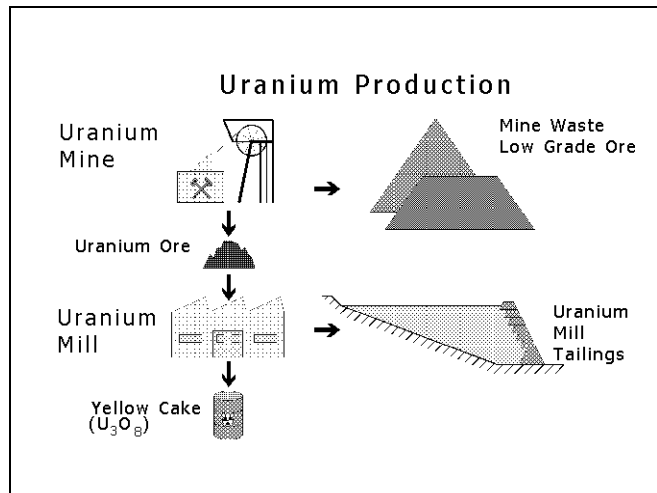
The Jabiluka mineral lease (Australia), 230 km east of Darwin and covering 73 sq km, is surrounded by the world famous Kakadu National Park, which has been inscribed on the World Heritage list due to its outstanding natural and cultural values, it is also near the tourist

### Where does Uranium come from?

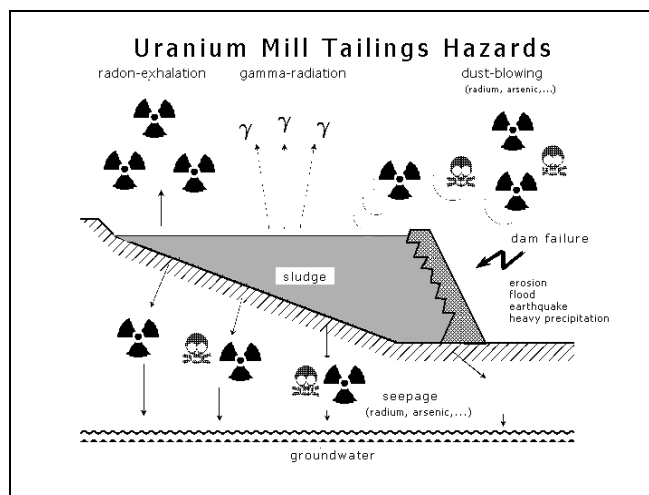


route to the ancient Aboriginal Ubirr rock art sites.

The Mirrar peoples argue that mining and its associated social, economic and political impacts are the single greatest impact on their living tradition, and that an additional mine will push their culture past the point of cultural exhaustion to genocidal decay. The Mirrar believe that the Australian Government supports mining at the expense of their very existence.



Most uranium mines in the U.S. have been shut down, but the radioactive wastes from uranium processing still pose a health risk to the population. These wastes, called mill tailings, contain long-lived radioactive isotopes. As of the late 1980s, some 220 million metric tons of mill tailings had accumulated from uranium production for nuclear weapons and nuclear power. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, groundwater has become contaminated at virtually all mill tailings sites.



Once the Uranium is mined and milled, it must be enriched in order to be usable in nuclear reactors and for nuclear weapons. Only four technologies have been used on a large scale for enriching uranium. Three of these, gaseous diffusion, gas centrifuges and jet nozzle/aerodynamic separation, are based on converting uranium in to uranium hexafluoride gas. The fourth technique, electromagnetic separation is based on using ionized uranium gas produces from solid uranium tetrachloride.

To enrich uranium, it must first be put in the chemical form uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>). After enrichment, UF<sub>6</sub> is chemically converted to uranium dioxide or metal. A major hazard in both the uranium conversion and uranium enrichment processes comes from the handling of uranium hexafluoride, which is chemically toxic as well as radioactive. Moreover, it reacts readily with moisture, releasing highly toxic hydrofluoric acid. Conversion and enrichment facilities have had a number of accidents involving uranium hexafluoride

- Enrichment Processes**
- Gaseous Diffusion
  - Gas Centrifuges
  - Electromagnetic Isotope Separation
  - Jet Nozzle/ Aerodynamic Separation

**Gaseous Diffusion**

The gaseous diffusion process was first developed in the 1940s as part of the Manhattan Project and was used to enrich a portion of the uranium used in the bomb that was dropped on Hiroshima. All five acknowledged nuclear weapons states within the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) regime have

operated gaseous diffusion plants at one time or another, but currently only the United States and France continue to operate such facilities. The diffusion process requires pumping uranium in a gaseous form through a large number of porous barriers and, as noted above, is very energy intensive.

In order to make the uranium into a gaseous form that can be used in the diffusion process, the natural uranium is first converted into uranium hexafluoride (UF<sub>6</sub>). The uranium hexafluoride molecules containing U-235 atoms, being slightly lighter, will diffuse through each barrier with a slightly higher rate than those containing U-238 atoms. A simple analogy to help visualize this process is to imagine blowing sand through a series of sieves. The smaller grains of sand will preferentially pass through each sieve, and thus after each stage they would represent a slightly higher percentage of the total than they did before passing through the stage.

### **Gas centrifuges**

Gas centrifuges are the most commonly used technology today for enriching uranium. The technology was considered in the U.S. during the Manhattan Project, but gaseous diffusion and electromagnetic separation were pursued instead for full scale production. The centrifuge was later developed in Russia by a team lead by Austrian and German scientists captured during the Second World War. The head of the experimentation group in Russia was eventually released and took the centrifuge technology first to the United States and then to Europe where he sought to develop its use in enriching commercial nuclear fuel.

The centrifuge is a common technology used routinely in a variety of applications such as separating blood plasma from the heavier red blood cells. In the enrichment process, uranium hexafluoride gas is fed into rapidly spinning cylinders. In order to achieve as much enrichment in each stage as possible, modern centrifuges can rotate at speeds approaching the speed of sound. It is this feature that makes the centrifuge process difficult to master, since the high rate of revolution requires that the centrifuge be sturdy, nearly perfectly balanced, and capable of operating in such a state for many years without maintenance. Inside the rotating centrifuge, the heavier molecules containing U-238 atoms move preferentially towards the outside of the cylinder, while the lighter molecules containing U-235 remain closer to the central axis. The gas in this cylinder is then made to circulate bottom to top driving the depleted uranium near the outer wall towards the top while the gas enriched in U-235 near the center is driven towards the bottom. These two streams (one enriched and one depleted) can then be extracted from the centrifuge and fed to adjoining stages to form a cascade just as was done with the diffusers in the gas diffusion plants.

Like the gas diffusion process, it requires thousands to tens of thousands of centrifuge stages to enrich commercially or militarily significant quantities of uranium. In addition, like the gas diffusion plants, centrifuge plants require the use of special materials to prevent corrosion by the uranium hexafluoride, which can react with moisture to form a gas of highly corrosive hydrofluoric acid. One of the most important advantages to the gas centrifuge over the gas diffusion process, however, is that it requires 40 to 50 times less energy to achieve the same level of enrichment. The use of centrifuges also reduces the amount of waste heat generated in compressing the gaseous UF<sub>6</sub>, and thus reduces the amount of coolants, such as Freon, that would be required. In order to enrich enough HEU in one year to manufacture a nuclear weapon like that dropped on Hiroshima would require between three and seven thousand centrifuges.

More advanced centrifuge designs are expected to achieve up to ten times the enrichment per stage as current models which would further cut down on the number necessary for the clandestine production of HEU. The reported sale of older European based centrifuge technology to countries like Libya, Iran, and North Korea from the network run by A.Q. Khan, the former head of the Pakistani nuclear weapons program, highlights the concerns over the smaller size and power needs of the centrifuge enrichment process from a proliferation standpoint.

### **Electromagnetic Isotope Separation (EMIS)**

The electromagnetic separation technique is a third type of uranium enrichment process that has been used in the past on a large scale. Developed during the Manhattan Project at Oak Ridge, Tennessee, the electromagnetic separation plant was used to both enrich natural uranium as well as to further enrich uranium that had been initially processed through the gaseous diffusion plant, which was also located at the Oak Ridge facility. The use of this type of facility was discontinued shortly after the war because it was found to be very expensive and inefficient to operate. Iraq did pursue this technique in the 1980s as part of their effort to produce HEU because of its relative simplicity in construction, but they were only successful in producing small amounts of medium enriched uranium (just above 20 percent).

### **Jet Nozzle / Aerodynamic Separation**

The final type of uranium enrichment process that has been used on a large scale is aerodynamic separation. This technology was developed first in Germany and employed by the apartheid South African government in a facility, which was supposedly built to supply low enriched uranium to their commercial nuclear power plants, as well as some quantity of highly enriched uranium for a research reactor. In reality, the enrichment plant also supplied an estimated 400 kg of uranium enriched to greater than 80% for military use. In early 1990, President de Klerk ordered the end of all military nuclear activities and the destruction of all existing bombs. This was completed roughly a year and a half later, just after South Africa joined the NPT regime and just before submitting to inspections and safeguards by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

### **Other Technologies**

There are a number of other uranium enrichment technologies, such as atomic vapor laser isotope separation (AVLIS), molecular laser isotope separation (MLIS), chemical reaction by isotope selective laser activation (CRISLA), and chemical and ion exchange enrichment that have been developed as well, but they are mostly still in the experimental or demonstration stage and have not yet been used to enrich commercial or military quantities of uranium.

The enrichment process can also be reversed. Highly enriched uranium can be diluted, or "blended down" with depleted, natural, or very low-enriched uranium to produce 3 to 5 percent low-enriched reactor fuel. Uranium metal at various enrichments must be chemically processed so that it can be blended into

### **Waste or Weapon?**

- "Depleted" Uranium
  - Dense, hard metal
  - Can cause chemical poisoning
  - Spontaneously burns on impact
  - Half life of 4.5 BILLION years
- Manufactured for DU weapons by France, UK and USA.

a homogeneous material at one enrichment level. As a result, the health and environmental risks of blending are similar to those for uranium conversion and enrichment.

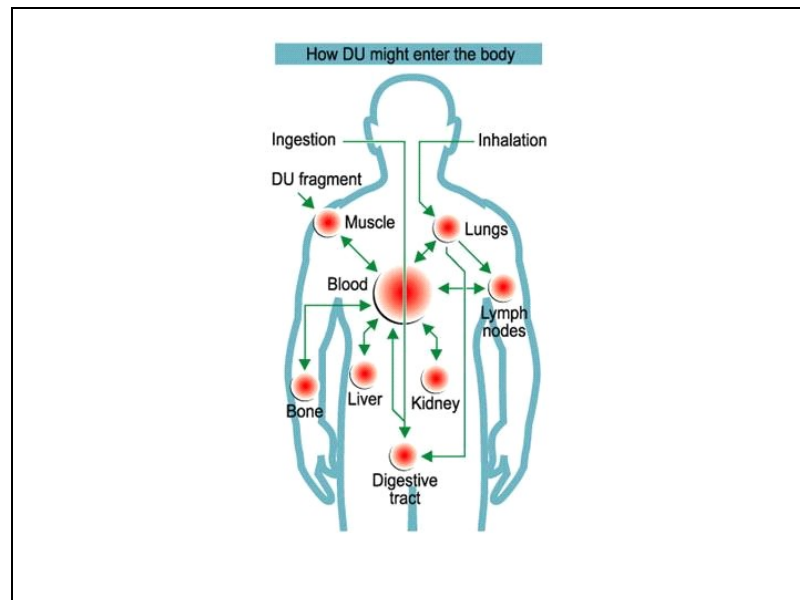
### Who does it?

All five recognized nuclear weapons states have at some time or another, had enrichment technologies. Additionally, non signatories to the NPT- India, Israel and Pakistan have also developed these technologies. Other states that are known to have developed, at some point or another, enrichment capabilities are: Iran, Iraq, North Korea, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Germany, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa and South Korea.

### Waste or weapon?

The bulk of waste from the enrichment process is depleted uranium – so-called because most of the uranium-235 has been extracted from it. Depleted uranium has been used by the U.S. military to fabricate armor-piercing conventional weapons and tank armor plating. It was incorporated into these conventional weapons without informing armed forces personnel that depleted uranium is a radioactive material and without establishing procedures for measuring doses to operating personnel.

Depleted uranium is chemically toxic. It is an extremely dense, hard metal, and can cause chemical poisoning to the body in the same way as can lead or any other heavy metal. However, depleted uranium is also radiologically hazardous, as it spontaneously burns on impact, creating tiny aerosolized glass particles which are small enough to be inhaled. These uranium oxide particles emit all types of radiation, alpha, beta and gamma, and can be carried



in the air over long distances. Depleted uranium has a half life of 4.5 billion years, and the presence of depleted uranium ceramic aerosols can pose a long term threat to human health and the environment.

The only countries, according to WISE-URANIUM that currently manufacture depleted uranium weapons are France, the UK and the USA.

### Health Effects

Uranium-238 emits alpha particles, which are less penetrating than other forms of radiation, and weak gamma rays. As long as it remains outside the body, uranium poses little health hazard (mainly from the gamma-rays). If inhaled or ingested, however, its radioactivity poses increased risks of lung cancer and bone cancer. Uranium is also chemically toxic at high concentrations and can cause damage to internal organs, notably the kidneys. Animal studies suggest that uranium may affect reproduction, the developing fetus, and increase the risk of leukemia and soft tissue cancers.

Like plutonium, uranium is a health hazard when small particles are inhaled or absorbed through wounds. But uranium is also more easily absorbed than plutonium through the gastrointestinal tract. Animal studies suggest that uranium may damage reproductive organs, may harm a developing fetus, and may increase the risk of leukemia and soft tissue cancers. Uranium is far less radioactive than plutonium, and uranium can cause acute damage to the kidneys by heavy metal poisoning well before radiation effects are manifest.

When in the form of small pieces of metal, plutonium and HEU can ignite upon exposure to air. There have been two major plutonium fires at the Rocky Flats plutonium processing plant near Denver – one in 1957 and one in 1969. The fires significantly contaminated parts of the facility. The amount of exposure to nearby populations is still being studied.

Under certain conditions, the accumulation of plutonium or HEU (such as in ventilation ducts or in solutions) can lead to a criticality, which is a chain reaction of fissioning atoms. The energy released from a criticality can be high enough to cause threats to worker safety and damage the container holding the materials.

Overall the use of uranium- whether for nuclear energy production, nuclear weapons, or in depleted uranium munitions, the process to extract uranium from the ground leaves a devastating legacy for those in the area. Where the uranium then goes- for the milling, and then eventual production for energy or weapons, also impacts communities with a legacy of toxicity. Later today we will talk about the need for a fissile materials treaty- the need to, at the very least, stop taking this substance from the ground. We will talk about the need for a comprehensive multilateral agreement banning the use of depleted uranium as a weapon- the need to fully implement the precautionary principle and to abide by the Hippocratic oath- first, do no harm.

I thank you for your kind attention this morning, and look forward to answering your questions.

## **4. A Fissile Material Treaty – Where It Is At and Where It Could Be**

**Jennifer Nordstrom, Project Associate, Reaching Critical Will, WILPF**

### **Introduction**

Concerns about fissile materials have been around as long as nuclear weapons, as have proposals for their regulation and/or prohibition. Because fissile materials are the essential and most difficult to produce element of nuclear weapons, controlling and prohibiting them is fundamental to nonproliferation and disarmament. Also, they are radioactive, and therefore dangerous in and of themselves.

A Fissile Materials Treaty (FMT) would at least make sure current stocks do not increase, could verify those stocks, and might even deal with undeclared stocks, depending on its terms.

Primarily I want to discuss why an FMT is useful and what it could potentially do, but its terms and current status are tied up in political and historical negotiations, so first I will give an overview of how it got where it now is.

### **Background**

There have been many proposals for regulating and/or prohibiting fissile materials since the first such proposal in 1957, but the current manifestation came from a 1993 General Assembly Resolution. The consensus resolution called for a “non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices”. It envisioned these fissile materials to include weapon-grade plutonium, weapon-grade highly enriched uranium (HEU), and uranium 233 for nuclear weapons. It also requested the International Atomic Energy Agency to provide assistance in examining verification arrangements for the treaty.

In 1994, the Conference on Disarmament appointed Ambassador Shannon of Canada as the Special Coordinator on a fissile materials treaty, and he worked to overcome the then prevailing disagreement over the scope of the treaty. In March of 1995, Ambassador Shannon submitted his Special Coordinator's Report to the CD ([CD/1299](#), commonly known as the Shannon Mandate) which called for the CD to establish an “Ad Hoc Committee to negotiate a non-discriminatory multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices”. Although this does not specify the scope, in his report, Shannon noted that the mandate does not preclude any delegation from raising the issue of scope within the negotiations and thus gained consensus on the mandate.

However, despite consensus on the mandate, the Non-Aligned Movement, led by India, insisted that establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on an FMT be linked to establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on Nuclear Disarmament. This was unacceptable to other states, and the Conference on Disarmament was deadlocked until 1998 when India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons and agreed to delink the FMT from nuclear disarmament. At the end of the 1998 session, the CD briefly established an Ad Hoc Committee on an FMT under Canadian Ambassador Mark Molner. However, the CD ground to another deadlock as soon as the 1999 session began and has been unable to get working again since.

Now, China and Russia insist that an FMT be linked to an Ad Hoc Committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), and NAM members insist it be linked to an Ad Hoc Committee on nuclear disarmament and/or an Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances. Five Ambassadors (Dembri from Algeria, Lint from Belgium, Reyes from Colombia, Salander from Sweden and Vega from Chile) came up with a compromise proposal including Ad Hoc Committees on all four issues, with varying mandates ([CD/1693Rev1](#)). Although this proposal (the A5 or Five Ambassadors' proposal) received the most support from CD members, it only appeared to have a genuine chance at success when China and Russia accepted it in August of 2003. All eyes were then on the United States, who remained silent on the subject.

Then, in August of 2004, the US announced it had completed its policy review of the Shannon Mandate on an FMT—the US's preferred action item in the CD. The US told the CD it had “serious concerns” about the mandate, and said realistic effective verification was “not achievable”. Later, it explained that an effectively verifiable FMT would “require an inspection regime so extensive that it could compromise key signatories' core national interests”.

## **Current Status**

### **Negotiations' Location**

The CD is still blocked on a Programme of Work. The Five Ambassadors' proposal still has the most support but does not appear to be moving. For the first time this year, however, the CD does have a tentative schedule for work based on its agenda and including each of the four core issues. This fledgling work schedule is more substantive than anything the CD has done for years, but it is still unclear how much work can and will actually be done. It is the result of collaboration among the six Presidents for the year (the CD rotates Presidents every four weeks based on alphabetical English language spelling): Poland, the Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian, Senegal and Slovakia. Together they developed a timeline for work and a group of Friends of the President to work with them over the year.

The threat of an initiative by a group of states in the 2005 First Committee to establish the Four Ad Hoc Committees of the Five Ambassadors' proposal probably facilitated consent to this initiative. The proposal basically would have circumvented the consensus rule by establishing the CD's most popular programme of work (the A5) in the corridors of the CD with the CD's money and Ambassadors but under the authority of the General Assembly. Although the New York 6 as they are now being called (Brazil, Canada, Kenya, Mexico, New Zealand and Sweden) did not introduce the resolution in the 2005 First Committee, they said they would give the 2006 CD and the work of the six Presidents a chance, and if progress is insufficient bring the proposal back in the 2006 First Committee. We are all watching the CD closely this year to determine if it is really working.

In addition to the above proposal, other states have suggested taking the FMT alone out of the CD and negotiating it elsewhere among the key states. We believe it is important to support the disarmament machinery of the United Nations, but this is a possibility.

### **Negotiating Mandate**

There are now two main contentious issues in the mandate: existing stocks and verification. Existing stocks could include already declared excess stocks, historically excess stocks, and/or undeclared stocks. By including excess stocks in the treaty, the FMT becomes a disarmament treaty and not just a nonproliferation treaty, as the most-well armed nuclear weapon states have the most excess fissile material. A fissile materials treaty is verifiable in a way similar to the way the International Atomic Energy Agency uses the Safeguards Agreement to verify the non-diversion of nuclear materials in non nuclear weapon states. Technical experts should be able to prove this is so.

### **The Treaty's Potential**

Depending on its mandate, an FMT could:

- Cap existing stocks where they are
- Bring irreversibility to disarmament if places declared excess fissile materials under international authority and it bans access to them and their return to military use (see [South Africa's proposal](#) on a Fissile Materials Treaty)
- Reduce discrimination in the NPT by increasing obligations on the nuclear weapon states and make the bookkeeping, safeguarding and responsibility of their fissile materials an international concern
- Complete the third of the 13 Practical Steps toward Nuclear Disarmament of the 2000 Review Conference

## **5. People Working for Peace, Justice and a Nuclear Weapons Free World**

### **Rae Street, Campaign against Depleted Uranium/Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament**

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak today. I feel particularly honoured to speak at a meeting of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, which last year celebrated 90 years of working for peace and against militarism and war.

It is also important that we speak out here in Geneva on a site of the United Nations, which also celebrated its birthday last year and 60 years of working to defeat the 'scourge of war'.

We must remember those memorable opening lines of the charter, so often repeated but, regrettably, not so often understood,

'We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war....'

The United Nations is the people. That is why I am so wary of posing the grass roots voice as a separate, and often counted as inferior, entity. If we look up 'grass roots' in the standard English dictionaries it will give a definition of 'rank and file', itself a military metaphor, originating from humble soldiers in a line, giving the sense again of a 'lower order' or 'ordinary people'. With the latter again the idea is conveyed of lesser folks, homely people but not the leaders.

None of those extra connotations are present in those fine opening words of the Charter, which is why it is so inspiring.

Therefore what we say today about arms, weapons and disarmament should be treated with respect and be the basis for legislation and not a side issue on which we are occasionally consulted.

### **Nuclear Weapons**

Let us consider one of our first themes: nuclear weapons which are weapons of mass destruction. The world at this moment is in a very serious situation with regard to nuclear weapons. After the dropping of the nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki over 60 years ago and the continued atmospheric testing, it was realised that these bombs and their development, presented the world with something completely unacceptable. That is that when the bombs were exploded they would kill and maim indiscriminately and untold numbers of innocent children, women and men would suffer. All wars bring suffering but these new technological developments presented not only immediate suffering but potential damage to the environment and damage to humans for generations. It was also realised, as atmospheric testing continued, that there would be radiation induced illnesses and deaths for people not only near the sites but across the world.

This was indeed so. On this the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic test over the Marshall Islands in 1946, tests which were continued until 1958 and the Bravo H Bomb, which was detonated at Bikini Atoll, on 1<sup>st</sup> March, (and when we are talking of words given to the English language what an irony that this should now be associated with a skimpy women's garment for attraction and allure!) we remember the people of the Marshall Islands who never asked

for this, never wanted nuclear bombs for ‘defence and security’. They are still struggling even to get compensation. Many of them have now died; many are very ill, many women had the fearful experience of bearing ‘jelly-fish’, deformed babies.

Firstly the United Nations passed the Partial Test Ban Treaty, then the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. But alas, to this day, the US continues to ignore the people’s voice and will not ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. Worse – the US, its ally, the UK, and other nuclear weapon states, continue to develop nuclear weapons and continue to test by carrying out, last week, sub-critical tests and developing laboratory testing to which the UK is also party.

Yet the will of the people was clear. The world should achieve a total ban on nuclear weapons. The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, passed in 1970, calls for nuclear weapon states to achieve disarmament ‘in good faith’. At the Review conference in 2000, the nuclear weapon states, including the US, agreed on an ‘unequivocal undertaking to eliminate all nuclear arsenals’. What has happened is has been the complete reverse. The NPT was blocked effectively by the US because of the policy of consensus in which one opposition vote can stop the process. Last year, the NPT Review Conference in New York failed to make progress.

At the same time, in the US and the UK the governments are planning a ‘replacement’ of the existing US Trident nuclear armed submarine system. There already exists on that fleet enough killing power to blow up the whole world. The US maintains 9 submarines, each of which can carry 24 missiles and each missile can carry 8 of the larger 455K W88 warheads – about 30 times the killing power of the bomb at Hiroshima. Even the, so called, British four Trident submarines can carry up to 48 nuclear 100kiloton warheads. Remember the 15 kiloton bomb dropped on Hiroshima killed and maimed over a quarter of a million innocent people.

This system is ‘integrated’ into NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) which has a policy of holding a ‘minimum nuclear deterrent’ and still has not changed its intention not only to use nuclear weapons but to use them first. Thus the Minister of Defence in the UK last year said the current UK government would similarly not change its policy of ‘first use’ because of its obligations to NATO.

To commit human resource and enormous sums of money to upgrading the system seems to be a decision made in a realm of insanity.

Furthermore, the US and the UK governments are breaking international law which they claim to support. It is worth stating clearly that the opinion given by Peacerights, Rabinder Singh QC and Professor Christine Chinkin of Matrix Chambers, in the UK, on the 24<sup>th</sup> December 2005 was that :

- (1) The use of the Trident system would breach customary international law, in particular because it would infringe the “intransgressible” requirement that a distinction must be drawn between combatants and non-combatants.
- (2) The replacement of Trident is likely to constitute a breach of Article VI of the NPT.
- (3) Such a breach would be a material breach of that treaty.

In the same month, December 2005, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution calling for the implementation of the promise to abolish nuclear weapons by an overwhelming majority vote, 153 in favour and 5 against.

Clearly the majority of people in the world are crying out for nuclear disarmament and a global ban on nuclear weapons.

Non-government organisations, such as WILPF, and campaigning groups are now really determined to push forward to the ultimate goal. In the UK, for example, CND, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, known worldwide for its peace symbol, has increased its membership and its campaigning work. It is a membership organisation with groups across the UK to which are distributed petitions, information briefings, draft letters for the local and regional press, lobby suggestions and lists of speakers. CND organises regular Parliamentary meetings and supports Early Day Motions in the House of Commons which alert Members of Parliament to really serious issues. They are pressing hard for a full debate on the, so-called, nuclear deterrent and determined to achieve an unstoppable tide of public opinion to prevent Trident Replacement.

On the other side of the world, Gensuikyo, the Japan Council Against A and H Bombs, is mounting a new signature campaign to build wider public support for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Their signature campaign is international and must be promoted. It is pleasing to see that WILPF and CND are giving strong support.

In the USA, groups including WILPF, Nukewatch in Wisconsin, Nuclear Resister in Tucson, Ground Zero in Bangor on the West coast and The trident Resistance Network on the East, Peace Action, United for Peace and Justice and the American Friends' Service Committee are working to bring the true facts to the public about the Administration's drive for militarism and its dangerous nuclear weapons policies which are not protecting people anywhere, either inside the US or across the world.

It is these groups in every country in the world who are bringing out the truth about the deadly dangers of nuclear weapons. They also puncture the hypocritical statements of the Foreign Ministers of the nuclear weapon states who state they need nuclear arms weapons for defence but hound other nations for looking as though they will develop them. This is a particularly dangerous policy in the Middle East where it is known that Israel has at least 200 nuclear warheads, but where Iran has not yet acquired them. The wiser course would be to uphold international law and the UN General Assembly Resolution, passed every year since 1974, for a Middle East nuclear-weapons free zone.

More and more people, despite the domination of the world wide media and press wires by the reactionary governments, are seeing through foreign policies which are pursued not to keep people safe but for power and power over resources. At the same time, people across the globe, but particularly in the Global South, are becoming more and more angry at the domination of the world by major corporations who bring profits and comfort to the rich and increasing hunger and illness to the poor. Militarism is one side of globalisation. War brings profits to the defence and weapons contractors and their representatives have the ear of, indeed in the US make up, the government and defence ministries.

There is a new mood abroad, which started with the massive demonstrations in 2003 against the US and the UK war on Iraq. There are demonstrations against US foreign military bases in Asia, South America and the Pacific and within the nuclear weapon states: USA, UK, and France. In Europe, the movement is growing to oust the US/NATO nuclear armed bases from Belgium to Turkey.

People realise that the huge weapons build up, the vast nuclear arsenals, principally held and developed by the USA, but carried out by all nuclear weapon states, will not protect any child, woman or man from violence and acts of ‘terrorism’. The children of the world cry out for food, clean water, shelter and education, not nuclear weapons.

Wise counsels are speaking out. The Nobel Prize winner, Mairead Corrigan Maguire in a Plea, ‘The Human Right to a Nuclear Free World’, published by Counterpunch, on 1 March, this year, said:

*‘I believe that we all have a human right to a nuclear free world and, in proclaiming that right, we affirm that we have chosen to live together, as the human family and friends, and not to die together as fools in a nuclear holocaust’.*

### **Uranium Weapons**

At this point I would also like to introduce a discussion on the new and dangerous weapon which have been developed by, and only used by, the US and UK governments. These are ‘depleted uranium’ weapons. Here again it is people’s actions and research which have brought the dangers to the wider public. The weapons are radiological and chemically poisonous. The campaigns in different countries were started when courageous journalists and visitors brought back reports from Iraq, where the weapons were first used in the first Gulf War in 1991, of an alarming rise in the incidence of cancers, particularly childhood leukaemia, and horrendous birth deformities in the areas where the munitions had been exploded. An example of a birth deformity not found any where or any time in the world was confirmed by a European doctor traveling to Iraq to meet his Iraqi colleagues. The Dutch Journal of Medicine reported the findings of the Flemish doctor, Edward de Sutter. He visited Iraq for himself and found 20 cases out of 4000 births in Iraq of babies with the phenomenon anophthalmos: babies who have been born with only one eye or who are missing both eyes. This very rare condition usually only seen in 1 out of 50 million births.

Groups were formed in Europe, Asia, the USA, and, understandably, Japan, which began to gather information and link with scientists from a wide variety of disciplines: biochemists and physicists, epidemiologists and those working on low level radiation research. International humanitarian lawyers believe that the use of this weapon, having as it does an ‘indiscriminate effect’, breaches international humanitarian law. Credit must go to the campaigning groups, together with concerned parliamentarians, that on 17<sup>th</sup> November last year the European Parliament issued a strong resolution on the use of DU weapons. The resolution reads: that the EP “reiterates its call for a moratorium – with a view to the introduction of a total ban – on the use of so-called ‘depleted uranium munitions.’”

Enormous progress has been made and now the groups and individuals have joined together to form the International Campaign to Ban Uranium Weapons (ICBUW). ([www.banuraniumweapons.org](http://www.banuraniumweapons.org)) A draft treaty has been written and steps are being taken to bring the treaty to the appropriate bodies of the United Nations. WILPF members can help

this process by lobbying their own governments. Background material can be found on the web site and is also available from the different national offices, including that of CADU (Campaign Against Depleted Uranium Weapons) in the UK. e-mail [info@caduorg.uk](mailto:info@caduorg.uk) website <http://www.cadu.org.uk>. They also will answer queries as far as they are able and welcome affiliations.

This year the NO-DU Project in Japan will host the second International Conference of ICBUW during the first week of August in Hiroshima. Details are available from:  
Professor Nobuo Kazashi: [horizon@cc22.nejp](mailto:horizon@cc22.nejp)

I would like to finish by quoting from Rosalie Bertell, WILPF member and one of the first scientists to expose the dangers of DU munitions. For her it is environmental and human security which is important, not the contradictory military security.

**Rosalie Bertell** from her book ‘**Planet Earth the Latest Weapon of War**’:

It is my belief that the best way we can ensure security for future generations and Earth itself is through a sound combination of economic, health, environmental and social programmes. Links are now being made between air, water and food protection and the existence of a sound economy and a healthy community. No part of this balance can be sacrificed without losing all three. Policies in the future must be pro-poor, pro-nature, pro-democracy, pro-women and pro-children.

## **5.1 Draft Convention on the prohibition of development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of uranium weapons and on their destruction.**

Prepared by M. Mohr and A. Samsel

### **Preamble**

The States Parties to this Convention,

RECALLING the principles of the Hague Regulations concerning the Laws and Customs of war on land, the Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols and especially the general principle of International Law on the protection of the civilian population against the effects of hostilities,

EMPHASISING the principle that the right of the parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited, and the principle that the employment in armed conflicts of weapons, projectiles, and material and methods of warfare of a nature to cause superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering is forbidden by International Law,

WITH REFERENCE to the prohibition of the use of poisonous weapons according to Art. 23 par. 1 of the Hague Regulations and the rules of the Poison Gas Protocol and the prohibition of widespread damage to the natural environment and unjustified destruction according to the Hague Regulations and the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions, as well as with reference to the principle of „humanitarian proportionality“, which is contained in the St. Petersburg Declaration,

CONFIRMING the resolutions of the Sub-Commission to the UN Commission on Human Rights (Res. 1996/16 and 1997/ 36), which state that the use of uranium ammunition is not in conformity with existing International and Human Rights Law,

BELIEVING that, based on the considerations and principles above, the use of uranium weapons is illegal,

STRIVING to put an end to casualties and alleviate suffering, caused by the use of uranium ammunition in recent wars, that indifferently leads to diseases among all people being in the operational area, thus also innocent civilians, especially children, the consequences of which on the affected and their families need long term treatment,

DETERMINED to act, so that the use of uranium ammunition in military conflicts will not happen in future and further development, extension and perfection of uranium weaponry will be stopped,

BELIEVING it necessary to support those States, in which victims of uranium ammunition use live, through an efficient and co-ordinated co-operation on the international level with material assistance and the delegation of experts for the treatment of victims and their families, as well as to enable their social and economical rehabilitation,

LED BY THE WILL to remove the late consequences of the uranium weapon use through marking and decontamination of the contaminated areas, as well as through protection and rehabilitation of victims,

CONVINCED that a convention prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of uranium weapons and providing for their destruction, is required to abolish these weapons from the Earth,

have agreed as follows:

## **Article 1**

### **General obligations**

(1) Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances:

a) to develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer, directly or indirectly, uranium ammunition, uranium armour-plate or other uranium weapons to anyone;

b) to use uranium ammunition, uranium armour-plate or other uranium weapons;

c) to assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention;

d) to acquire or dispose pre-products for development and production of uranium weapons;

e) to use depleted uranium in any way for military purposes.

(2) Each State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of uranium ammunition, uranium armour-plate, other uranium weapons or the pre-products for development and production it owns or possesses, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, or latest 5 years after the Convention has become effective for the concerned State Party, in accordance with the provisions of that Convention.

(3) Every State Party undertakes to destroy or ensure the destruction of any uranium ammunition, uranium armour-plate and other uranium weapon production facilities it owns or possesses, or that are located in any place under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, or latest 5 years after the Convention has become effective for the concerned State Party, in accordance with the provisions of that Convention.

(4) Every State Party undertakes to transform depleted uranium, produced or left over during the destruction of uranium ammunition or of production establishments, into a stable chemical compound and to store it in a safe final storage.

(5) Every State Party provides a report on the fulfilment of the conventions' obligations and transmits it to the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Uranium Weapons Centre.

## **Article 2**

### **Definitions**

(1) "Uranium ammunition" means munitions with uranium anchors which may, by reason of its high density and hardness, penetrate armour steel,

- (2) "Uranium armour-plate" means an armour which contains depleted uranium to make the armour harder and resistant to be shot through,
- (3) "Uranium weapon" means a mechanism which serves to destroy or damage objects and uses depleted uranium in its mode of action,
- (4) "Contaminated area" or "contaminated waters" means an area or waters which have been contaminated by reason of the use of uranium ammunition,
- (5) "Decontamination" means the abolishment of the radiation effect as well as of other consequences which have been caused by the use of uranium weapons and have negative effects on the human health,
- (6) "Transfer" covers the physical take of uranium ammunition or uranium armour- plate to or from a state territory as well as the transfer of that title to uranium ammunition and to the control over uranium ammunition,
- (7) "Pre-product" means the chemical reaction component which is used at any stage during any type of production of uranium ammunition or uranium weaponry, especially the radioactive waste.
- (8) "Uranium ammunition production facility" means facilities in which uranium ammunition is being developed, produced or brought to perfection,

### **Article 3**

#### **Exceptions**

The transfer of uranium ammunition or other uranium weapons for the purpose of its destruction is permitted, if a safe final storage of the uranium in a chemical stable compound is guaranteed. The civil using of depleted uranium is forbidden.

### **Article 4**

#### **Decontamination of uranium contaminated areas**

- (1) Each State Party undertakes to decontaminate or to guarantee the decontamination of areas under its jurisdiction or control, which have been contaminated with depleted uranium by military force actions or any other reason as soon as possible, at latest five years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State Party. The decontamination of previously contaminated areas shall be regulated in an Additional Protocol to this Convention.
- (2) Each State Party endeavours to identify and mark all areas under its jurisdiction or control where uranium ammunition has been used notoriously or presumably, especially theatres of operation, military training grounds and scenes of accident.

(3) Each State Party undertakes to warn people living in all areas under its jurisdiction or control where uranium ammunition has been used notoriously or presumably of the danger and to afford any support during times until absolute decontamination, especially to isolate the contaminated areas, to adopt precautionary measures through ABC-teams, to inform the population and to conduct health examinations. The medical care of all previously injured shall be regulated in an Additional Protocol to this Convention.

(4) As far as considerable danger exists for the health or life of civilians living in contaminated areas, the State Party shall endeavour to transfer civilians to other, not contaminated areas until the abolishment of the danger.

(5) The information on contaminated areas, especially theatres of operation, military training grounds, scenes of accident shall be conveyed to the Uranium Weapons Centre.

(6) If a State Party is not in a position to decontaminate or to guarantee the decontamination of all contaminated areas designated in par. 1 within the mentioned period, it may request the Meeting of the States Parties or the Review Conference for a prolongation of the period to terminate the decontamination up to ten years.

(7) Each State Party shall report on the conducted decontamination of uranium contaminated areas under its jurisdiction or control every two years.

## **Article 5**

### **International co-operation and support**

(1) In fulfilling its obligations under this Convention each State Party has the right to seek and receive assistance, where feasible, from other States Parties to the extend possible.

(2) Each State Party undertakes to facilitate the exchange of scientific and technological information concerning the implementation of this Convention and has the right to participate in the interchange.

(3) Every State Party, which is in a position to this, shall provide help concerning welfare work, medical assistance and rehabilitation as well as social and economic reintegration of the victims of uranium weapons use. It shall support programmes with regard to the explanation of dangers of uranium weapons use. The support may be provided among other things, within the system of the United Nations, international, regional and national organisations or institutions, the International Committee of the Red Cross, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Federation, non-governmental organisations or on bilateral basis.

(4) Every State Party, which is in a position to this, shall provide help on the decontamination of uranium contaminated areas and waters and other activities. This support may be provided, among other things, within the system of the United Nations, international, regional and national organisations or institutions, the International Committee of the Red Cross, National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and their International Federation, non-governmental organisations or on bilateral basis.

(5) States Parties may request the United Nations, regional organisations, other States Parties or any other inter-governmental or non-governmental committees to support their

authorities and national places of contact in the preparation of a domestic decontamination programme to lay down the following among other things:

- a) extension and dimension of the problems caused by the use of uranium ammunition,
- b) the required financial, technological and personal means for the fulfilment of the programme,
- c) the forecasted time period necessary for the decontamination of the areas under jurisdiction or control of the concerned State Party,
- d) support for the victims of uranium ammunitions use, especially their treatment and transfer to not contaminated areas,
- e) the relationship between the government of the concerned State Party and the relevant governmental, inter-governmental and non-governmental institutions, that will be involved in the fulfillment of the programme.

(6) Each State Party undertakes to facilitate to supply information and reports to the Uranium Weapons Centre and the Meeting of States Parties, especially about different methods and technologies of decontamination and lists of experts and expert agencies or national contact places.

(7) All States Parties, which provide and receive support on basis of this Article, shall work together with regard to the securing of the entire and immediate fulfillment of the stipulated programmes.

## **Article 6**

### **Partnership**

(1) The assistance for the States Parties affected by use of uranium weapons, outlined in Art.5 may take place in the form of partnerships among States Parties.

(2) The partnership model covers conception-planning, material and personal support of one State Party to another, which is especially affected by the use of uranium ammunition and not in position to fulfill the obligations of this Convention by its own efforts.

## **Article 7**

### **National implementation measures**

(1) Each State Party shall take all appropriate legal, administrative and other measures, including the imposition of penal sanctions, in order to fulfill its obligations under this Convention.

(2) In particular, each State Party especially prohibits natural and legal persons anywhere on its territory or any other place under its jurisdiction to engage in any activity prohibited for a State Party under this Convention.

(3) Each State Party shall co-operate with other States Parties and afford the appropriate form of legal assistance to facilitate the implementation of obligations under par. 1.

## **Article 8**

### **Assistance and protection against the use of uranium ammunition**

In case of use or the threat of use of uranium ammunition each State Party has the right to seek and receive assistance, help and protection against this use or threat of use.

## **Article 9**

### **Meeting of States Parties**

(1) The States Parties shall meet regularly in order to consider any matter with regard to the application or implementation of this Convention, including

- a) matters that arise from the reports, submitted on basis of this Convention,
- b) the international co-operation according to Art. 5 and 6,
- c) decisions concerning submissions of the States Parties according to Art. 4 par. 6,
- d) revision of reports according to Art. 1 par. 5, Art. 4 par. 7 and Art. 15 par. 9,
- e) fulfilling the obligations according to Art. 5 par. 8.

(2) The first Meeting of States Parties shall be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations within one year after the entry into force of the Convention. The subsequent meetings shall be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations annually until the first Review Conference.

(3) States not parties to this Convention, as well as the United Nations, other relevant international organisations or institutions, regional organisations, the Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organisations may be invited to attend these meetings as observers in accordance with the agreed Rules of Procedure.

## **Article 10**

### **Review conferences**

(1) A Review Conference shall be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations four years after the entry into force of this Convention. Further Review Conferences shall be convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations if so requested by one or more States Parties, provided that the interval between Review Conferences shall in no case be less than 3 years. All States Parties to this Convention shall be invited to each Review Conference.

(2) The purpose of the Review Conference shall be:

- a) to review the operation and status of this Convention,

b) to consider the need for and the interval between further Meetings of the States Parties referred to in Art. 9,

c) discussion and decision of the organisational structure of the Convention and the establishment of new authorities,

d) to adopt, if necessary, in its final report conclusions related to the implementation of this Convention.

(3) States not party to this Convention, as well as the United Nations, other relevant international organisations or institutions, regional organisations, the International Committee of the Red Cross and relevant non-governmental organisations may be invited to attend each Review Conference as observers in accordance with the agreed Rules of Procedure.

## **Article 11**

### **The Uranium Weapons Centre**

(1) The Uranium Weapons Centre shall be called into being at the first Meeting of States Parties. The Centre shall be established within the United Nations system.

(2) The Centre shall provide a data base with unrestrictedly accessible information, which shall be supplied by the States Parties 90 days after its establishment at the latest and shall maintain the data base for the use by each requesting State Party.

(3) In agreement with the Secretary-General of the United Nations the Centre shall provide and update a list of qualified experts, which shall offer advises for the Centre or a State Party if required. The Secretary-General of the United Nations appoints members of the fact-finding mission under Art. 14 out of the list of experts. The list which contains names, nationality and other suitable data of the experts participating in the fact-finding mission shall be conveyed to all States Parties.

(4) In the frame of disposable funds and after consultation of the fund administrator the Centre orders expertises on the request of a State Party about the allocation of funds and helps the State Party to implement its programmes.

## **Article 12**

### **Funds**

(1) A voluntary fund shall be established at the first Meeting of the States Parties. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall administrate the fund.

(2) The purpose of the fund is to finance expertises about the use of uranium weapons as well as about the dimension of the damage. Programmes for decontamination of uranium contaminated areas shall be financed by means of the disposable funds.

(3) Each State Party shall announce the amount of its voluntary contribution at the first Meeting of States Parties.

## **Article 13**

### **Clarification of questions**

(1) If one or more States Parties wish to clarify and seek to resolve questions relating to the compliance with the provisions of this Convention by another State Party, it may submit, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, a Request for Clarification of that matter to that State Party. Such a request shall be accompanied by all appropriate information. A State Party that receives a Request for Clarification shall provide, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, within 4 weeks to the requesting State Party all information which would assist in clarifying this matter.

(2) If the requesting State Party does not receive a response through the Secretary-General of the United Nations within that time period, or deems the response to the Request for Clarification to be unsatisfactory, it may submit the matter through the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the next Meeting of States Parties. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall transmit the submission, accompanied by all appropriate information pertaining to the Request of Clarification, to all States Parties. All such information shall be presented to the requested State Party which shall have the right to respond.

(3) Between the Meetings of States Parties, any of the States Parties concerned may request the Secretary-General of the United Nations to exercise its good offices to facilitate the clarification requested.

### **Article 14**

#### **Fact-finding mission**

(1) If clarification of a matter is impossible at the Meeting of States Parties, the Meeting of States Parties shall authorise a fact-finding mission and decide on its mandate by a majority of States Parties voting.

(2) The requested State Party has the obligation to provide access for the entry of the fact-finding mission to their territory or any other place under its jurisdiction or control.

(3) The mission is composed of 9 appointed and authorised experts. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall appoint the members of the fact-finding mission and its administrator after consultation of the requested State Party. Nationals of States Parties requesting the mission or in direct cohesion with them may not be appointed for the mission.

(4) The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall designate experts from the list under Art.11 par. 3 for members of the mission. In the event of non-acceptance in writing of an expert by a State Party, the expert shall not participate in fact-finding missions on the territory of any other place under the jurisdiction or control of the objecting State Party.

(5) Upon at least 48 hours notice, the members of the fact-finding mission shall arrive in the territory of the requested State Party at the earliest opportunity.

(6) The members of the fact-finding mission shall enjoy privileges and immunities under Article VI of the Convention of the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations, adopted on 13 February 1946. The requested State is responsible for the security of the members of the mission on their territory.

(7) The requested State Party shall grant access for the fact-finding mission to all areas and installations under its control as well as inspection of documents, as far as necessary to fact-finding, object of the mission or in direct cohesion to the mission.

(8) The fact-finding mission may remain in the territory of the State Party concerned for no more than 14 days, unless otherwise agreed.

(9) The fact-finding mission shall report, through the Secretary-General of the United Nations, to the Meeting of States Parties the results of its findings. The Meeting of States Parties shall consider all relevant information, including the report submitted by the fact-finding mission. Determining a breach of the present Convention by the control, the Meeting of States Parties may request the State Party to remove the breach of this Convention or take measures to address the compliance issue. The requested State Party shall report on all measures taken in response to this request.

## **Article 15**

### **Settlement of Disputes**

(1) The States Parties shall consult and co-operate with each other to settle disputes that may arise concerning the application or interpretation of this Convention. Every State Party may bring any such dispute to the Meeting of States Parties.

(2) The Meeting of the States Parties may contribute to the settlement of the dispute by whatever means it deems appropriate, including offering its good offices, calling upon the States parties to a dispute to start the settlement procedure of their choice and recommending a time-limit for any agreed procedure.

(3) The States Parties ask the Secretary-General of the United Nations to mediate with the settlement of the dispute, if it can not be settled between the States Parties and the means of par. 2.

(4) Otherwise it remains reserved to the States Parties to call on the International Court of Justice and ask for a judicial decision.

## **Article 16**

### **Liability**

Each State Party that uses uranium weapons in a conflict is responsible for clarification, decontamination of uranium contaminated areas and medical care as well as compensation of the victims. It is responsible for all actions committed by persons belonging to its military forces.

## **Article 17**

### **Amendments**

(1) At any time after the entry into force of this Convention any State Party may propose amendments to this Convention. Any proposal for an amendment shall be communicated to the Depository, who shall circulate it to all State Parties and shall seek their views on whether an Amendment Conference should be convened to consider the proposal. If a majority of the States Parties notify the Depository within 4 weeks after its circulation that they support

further consideration of the proposal, the Depository shall convene an Amendment Conference to which all States Parties shall be invited.

(2) The Amendment Conference shall be held immediately following a Meeting of States Parties or a Review Conference unless a majority of the States Parties request that it be held earlier.

(3) Any amendment to this Convention shall be adopted by a majority of two-thirds of the States Parties present and voting at the Amendment Conference. The Depository shall communicate any amendment so adopted to the States Parties.

## **Article 18**

### **Duration and withdrawal**

(1) This Convention shall be of unlimited duration.

(2) Each State Party shall, in exercising its national sovereignty, have the right to withdraw from this Convention. It shall give notice of such withdrawal to all other States Parties and to the Depository. Such instrument of withdrawal shall include a full explanation of the reason motivating this withdrawal.

(3) The withdrawal of a State Party from this Convention shall not affect the obligations of other States Parties.

## **Article 19**

### **Signature**

This Convention, done in..... shall be open for signature at.....by all States from..... until..... .

## **Article 20**

### **Ratification, acceptance, approval, accession**

(1) This Convention is subject to ratification, acceptance or approval of all Signatories.

(2) It shall be open for accession by any State which has not signed the Convention.

(3) The instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession shall be deposited with the depository.

## **Article 21**

### **Entry into force**

(1) This Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the sixth month in which the 20th instrument of the ratification, approval or accession has been deposited.

(2) For any State which deposits its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession after the date of the deposit of the 20th instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, this Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the sixth month after the date on which that state has deposited its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession.

**Article 22****Depository**

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is hereby designated as the Depository of the Convention.

**Article 23****Reservations**

The Articles of this Convention shall not be subject to reservations.

**Article 24****Authentic texts**

The original of this Convention, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall convey certified transcripts to each State Party.

## 6. Summary of discussions

After Susi Snyder's presentation on the basics of uranium, as well as fissile materials and depleted uranium (DU), participants engaged in discussion of these issues during the morning session. Jennifer Nordstrom's and Rae Street's presentations on a Fissile Materials Treaty and grassroots activities, respectively, created further insightful discussion.

Questions were raised concerning medical studies on the use of depleted uranium in Iraq. In general, conducting official surveys is a difficult process, but NGOs working on these issues currently have proposed two studies. One is a study conducted in cooperation with Iraqi doctors, with help from Japan, Germany and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW); the other one, a so-called "tooth project," where scientists from the UK and US analyze teeth from children after the conflict and compare with 'historical teeth'. One significant obstacle to these studies, however, is funding. In the "tooth project", analyzing one tooth costs USD 1000. Furthermore, the reliability and independence of the scientists working with the projects is another issue. Participants raised the concern that some reports seem to exaggerate effects of DU, thereby rendering difficult the distinction between the truth and the exaggerated truth.

The critical impact of DU on women and children in particular was brought up, and suggestions were raised that similar seminars should be conducted in conflict and post-conflict countries to an audience who suffer from the health effects of DU in their daily life. Women in these areas should be encouraged to work on the issue. The need for a feminist perspective on disarmament and for women to take a leading role in these issues was also discussed. Female delegation representatives are increasing in the Conference on Disarmament, but most ambassadors are men who have worked with disarmament issues for many years without applying a gender-sensitive perspective. One participant noted that women tend to be more concerned with effects on body and future generations in general, thus reminding us of why the issue was brought up on the International Women's Day.

The seminar also examined the division between people who underestimate the dangers of DU and those who pose serious concerns. It was mentioned that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is of the opinion that radiation hits the exterior of the body without noting that DU particles also enter the body through eating and breathing. Once DU enters the body, it emits alpha and beta radiation in a different manner than it would if it just contacts the epidermal barrier. The uranium particles actually enter the phosphate groups of the body's DNA. ATP and ADB, important molecules that provide energy to the cell, also consist of phosphate groups. Participants called for further independent research to be conducted on the health risks arising from DU, as many remain unknown.

One participant discussed a [January 2006 report by Chris Busby on the spread of DU particles](#). Experts have long claimed that DU particles cannot travel very far but repeated measurement data show peaks of DU in the UK after the war on Iraq and Tora Bora in Afghanistan. Busby's report reveals that DU particles are small enough to behave like gas and thus can spread from Iraq to UK. Another illustration of the negative health effects of DU was brought up with reference to Dr. Helen Caldicott's research on mortality and the nuclear chain. She indicates that in the last 60 years, over a million deaths can be attributed to the entire nuclear chain, which ranges from uranium mining, milling and processing to use in weapons or nuclear reactors to nuclear waste. Considering that the half life of U-235 is about

700 million years, the number of deaths attributable to the nuclear chain will continue in the future.

Participants also questioned what lessons can NGOs focusing on nuclear disarmament and DU issues learn from the efficient cooperation between civil society and governments that occurred before the establishment of the Mine Ban Treaty in 1999. The International Coalition to Ban Uranium Weapons had already presented a draft convention on the prohibition of development, production, stockpiling, transfer, and use of uranium weapons and on their destruction. The draft has been largely inspired by the work of movements against landmines. Participants to the seminar were called upon to put pressure on their governments at home in order to gain support for the Draft Convention, which could be introduced to the United Nations General Assembly First Committee as soon as September 2006.

The implementation of a Fissile Material Treaty was discussed, and further questions were discussed on the implications of a similar treaty regarding the regulation of DU. A FMT would only ban the production of weapons grade materials, which implies that production of civilian fissile materials would still be legal. Thus, production of DU would be continued. A FMT, therefore, must be comprehensive, clear, and well defined to distinguish the threshold amount of uranium needed to be enriched in order to be considered a material for nuclear explosions. Again, the Draft Convention to ban uranium weapons could assist in clarification of these terms.

A common observation among the participants was the idea that pressure on officials should be concentrated at home on their respective governments. The point was made that if governments do not feel the pressure from civil society and from their parliaments, they are unlikely to find a reason to change their standpoints on issues of disarmament. A year ago, WILPF submitted letters to 33 public officials in the US, the UK and within the UN regarding the issue of DU. The importance for local groups to express their concern by writing to not only public officials who are accessible but to corporations as well was underscored.

The WILPF US Section is in the process of examining corporations who profit from the nuclear chain. WILPF's Reaching Critical Will project, in a joint initiative with the Arms Trade Resource Center of the World Policy Institute, has created the [Dirty Dozen](#) project. This project lists the world's thirteen (a baker's dozen) dirtiest arms manufacturers and focuses on their products, their clients and their clients' purchases, and the companies' branches and allies. The Dirty Dozen project is a thorough source of information for groups desiring to confront corporations profiting from the nuclear industry.

Nuclear power and its related problems were then discussed. "Using nuclear energy is like launching a rocket without having planned how the rocket will land", stated one participant. That there has been a change in public opinion was also noted. Now it is observed that governments who view nuclear power as a response to climate issues and increasing energy demands no longer enjoy broad public support. The paramount importance of refuting the argument that nuclear power lessens climate deterioration was also emphasized.

Nuclear waste from military as well as civilian use and possible ways to handle it properly generated extensive discussion. There are less than 450 operating commercial reactors in the world currently, a number expected to increase. As of yet, no viable long-term solution to the

problem of nuclear waste disposal has been determined. Short-term stop gap measures mixing nuclear waste with glass, e.g. vitrification, are currently in place. We are, however, facing a very long term problem, with approximately 7000 generations to be affected during the 250 000 years of storage needed. Although money has already been spent and ideas put forward, no consensus on a feasible solution has yet been reached.

Ideas for safe nuclear waste disposal range from above-ground, monitored, retrievable storage in canisters to deep geological burial. The latter method has been undertaken by the US, which has agreed to take high-level waste from other countries and bury it in Yucca Mountain. This mountain, however, is on the corner of a US nuclear test site that has 33 earthquake fault lines running through it, which raises concerns for the practicality and safety of a high-level nuclear storage site. Deals have also been struck with impoverished Native American tribes for above-ground storage of waste from seventy reactors, which would contaminate their land for generations.

Other ideas that have been proposed as a long-term solution to high-level nuclear waste include international centers for collecting and processing waste, sub-seabed disposal, and disposal of waste in outer space. Regarding the latter proposal, participants learned that as little as one pound of plutonium evenly spread around the world would be a sufficient amount to cause lung cancer in every living being. Many facilities around the world currently accept low-level nuclear waste for storage. Despite the reassuring terminology of “low level”, this waste still includes trace bits of HEU and plutonium.

A statement about the inducement to change policy only after the occurrence of certain catastrophes, such as that of violent terrorist acts, sparked some discussion. The principle of enacting policy change was regarded as positive, but participants agreed that it is a catastrophe itself if a disaster is required to initiate the change.

The importance of NGOs covering issues of disarmament and arms control was brought up. As one participant noted, diplomats change in the Conference on Disarmament, as is the case in the global disarmament and non-proliferation work in general. Thus, it becomes important to retain experts who have worked on these issues over a longer period of time, can keep the institutional memory; and pass on their knowledge. In reference to the annual International Women’s Day statement from the seminar to the CD, the exclusion of civil society in the works of the Conference was discussed. Despite broad support among delegations in the Conference to have the International Women’s Day statement be read aloud by its authors, the statement prepared by the NGO community was once again delivered by the CD President due to the rule of consensus.

## 7. NGO Statement to the Conference on Disarmament on the Occasion of International Women's Day

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Delegates,

We were hoping to be able to read this statement to you in 2006 for the first time in the more than twenty years we have been presenting it to the CD. However, despite all the support we have heard over the past several weeks, apparently it is not yet possible to have a female civil society leader address you from the floor in a statement delivered once a year on the occasion of International Women's Day. Although we are disappointed that we are unable to read our own statement, we see this as a testimony to the power of civil society and women's NGOs in particular. We would especially like to thank the Ambassadors and representatives who so eloquently spoke on our behalf to request the opportunity to address this forum ourselves.

International Women's Day began in 1909 and has been directly linked with the engagement of women in political processes. In the CD, only 13% of member state delegations are led by women. This year, civil society around the world is marking International Women's Day through protesting war, campaigning for Nuclear Disarmament and demanding equal participation in all levels of decision-making. As we have done since 1984, we are bringing the voices of women to the CD.

NGOs have long been called the conscience of the international community, but we also serve practical functions. Every week, we are in the gallery, listening to the public debates and then sharing them with concerned people around the world. We offer numerous resources to you – we act as a liaison to the public, as a source for technical expertise, and as archives and as institutional memory.

Our utility in these areas is widely recognized and we have formed fruitful collaborative relationships with governments over the years. It is time for you to formally recognize our work and explore best practices developed in other international security fora here in the CD. The CD will benefit from greater transparency and engagement with the outside world. We are happy to work with you to facilitate that.

Having watched this forum for decades, allow us to share some observations from the gallery. On the programme of work that has eluded you for the past nine years, we not only hear the most governmental support for the "5 Ambassadors' proposal" to establish ad hoc committees on:

- Fissile Material Treaty
- Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS)
- Nuclear Disarmament
- Negative Security Assurances (NSAs)

We have not yet heard a single plenary statement opposing it. We are told the CD is no closer to consensus, but not told why. The world would like to know who opposes the A5 proposal, and why, and what alternative suggestions will be made to achieve consensus on a Programme of Work.

We also have not heard a single state publicly oppose a Fissile Materials Treaty (FMT). If the only impediment to beginning negotiations is the CD's inability to consense on a Programme of Work, then we expect we will see significant efforts, especially from the major stakeholders, to delve into the issues surrounding an FMT this year. The Presidents of the year have provided you with an excellent opportunity to investigate technical issues and explore convergence in areas of difficulty. Any serious examination will include technical experts from around the world and capitals. We expect to see members of the newly formed fissile materials panel here in May as well as experts from your capitals. We expect to see in-depth debate on verification and on existing stocks. We expect these discussions to act as pre-negotiations, to develop a framework for negotiations. We also expect these discussions to be of enough significance to regenerate confidence in the CD so negotiations begin as soon as possible. The seriousness of this exercise will have a significant influence on the outside world's opinion of the CD's ability to work without help from other fora.

NGOs are ready to support and encourage all pre-negotiations and negotiations of an FMT. Our International Women's Day seminar this year paid attention to an FMT, linking it to making progress on non-proliferation and disarmament. An FMT is verifiable, and verification is absolutely crucial to any effective disarmament and nonproliferation regime. We believe that just as the international community learned how to verify the CTB which was then negotiated, science will prove the verifiability of an FMT. We want you to begin negotiations as soon as possible, and if they begin before you reach consensus on verification, we are confident these issues can and will be worked out during negotiations.

We believe nuclear disarmament can and will be achieved. We recognize there are challenges and setbacks in the process of achieving true international peace and security, but our confidence in this body to overcome those obstacles remains strong.

Thank you.

NGO Working Group on Peace

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

International Alliance of Women

## **7.1 Delegations Positions Regarding the NGO Statement to the Conference on Disarmament**

*7 February 2007, Ireland, Ambassador Mary Whelan*

“I wish also to take the opportunity to restate my delegation’s strong commitment to enhancing the role of Civil Society in our deliberations. Addressing this Conference in 2004 the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ireland queried “how a body charged with a mandate of such relevance to humankind and drawing its budget from the United Nations can continue to effectively exclude Civil Society from a meaningful role in its deliberations”. In this context, could I express my delegation’s strong wish that we can take a modest step forward in 2006. At minimum my delegation wishes to have the annual statement of NGOs on International Women’s Day delivered by its authors.”

*7 Feb, New Zealand, Ambassador Tim Caughley*

“It will be another demonstration of the sense of purpose and relevance of this Conference, if as Ireland’s Ambassador has made clear, the CD can take a more enlightened approach to the delivery of the annual Women’s Day statement next month.”

*23 Feb, Republic of Korea, Ambassador In-kook Park*

“Last but not least, as part of energizing the interest and support of the general public for non-proliferation and disarmament, I believe the CD should be encouraged to explore various ways of facilitating broader engagement with civil society and the larger global community in an adequate and balanced manner.”

*2 March, Nigeria, Ambassador Joseph Ayalogu*

“My delegation believes that allowing civil society to participate more in the work of the CD from this stage would help us to make progress in addressing the threats posed by nuclear weapons. They could be able, through their objective research and analysis, to possibly convince even those in possession of nuclear weapons that the weapons do not make them safer or more protected. Let us consider and take a decision to allow them to make more regular impute to our work.”

*9 March, Norway, Mr. Kjetil Paulsen*

“Secondly, Mr. President, once again we have today experienced the bizarre practice that the NGO statement in relation to International Women's Day had to be read out by an intermediary. It is as embarrassing as the general impasse of this Conference is embarrassing.”

*9 March, Ireland, Mr. Declan Smyth*

“Some weeks ago, Ireland made a proposal to allow an NGO to deliver directly the statement they drafted for International Women's Day. This proposal received broad, cross-group support. You, Mr. President responded positively, and indicated that you proposed to seek to facilitate this request. However, today we have seen the repetition of the same sorry tradition of other years. The situation that we witnessed here today is at variance with good practice in the United Nations and in other disarmament fora. Here, statements may be delivered, but not by those who drafted. They are to remain silent. Seen, but not heard. That this should be regarded as a fitting way to celebrate International Women's Day is a travesty and an insult.

But the manner in which the wish of those who supported the Irish proposal was ignored is also a travesty. A proposal was made by a member of this Conference. It was supported by a large number of speakers. No member spoke against it. What rule of procedure was used to deal with this matter? I can only presume that some member or members believed that consensus equates with a veto - a silent veto. We can only presume that some members let the Chair know that they could not agree to this modest step into the real world, but they have not sought to explain their position to this forum.

Last week Ireland spoke on the subject of transparency in nuclear disarmament. Transparency in the manner in which this Conference works is clearly an even more difficult objective to achieve.

We thank the United States' delegation for circulating today Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's statement on International Women's Day. We would certainly welcome hearing its views on facilitating the delivery by the NGO concerned of its own statement on International Women's Day."

*9 March, Kenya, Ambassador Philip Richard O. Owade*

"Mr. Chairman, we did not plan to speak today, but we have taken the floor to make a brief comment on the statement that was to be delivered by the NGOs on the International Women's Day. We truly regret that that statement could not be delivered directly by those who drafted it. Our delegation did not speak when this matter was under discussion, but we want to make it clear that we were with the majority of delegations who supported the Irish proposal. It is truly regrettable, and we want to join those who have expressed disappointment on this situation which, in our view, is deplorable."

*9 March, Sweden, Mr. Magnus Hellgren*

"I would like to make a brief comment on the issue that has been discussed on the NGO statement. Before addressing the procedural aspects of it, I'd like to take this opportunity to address our appreciation to the authors of that statement for a most useful and thought-provoking contribution to our work here, and I hope some of the authors will note that in the galleries where they are, I assume. As a representative of a delegation who in this plenary on the record supported the very clear and wise proposal delivered by Ireland, we would like at this point to add our voice to those who feel very strong dismay over the fact that this proposal was not accepted and put into practice. The practice we have again witnessed today, with the voice of women on the occasion of International Women's Day to be heard through an intermediary - a very distinguished intermediary, I must say - is again a reflection on the procedural problems of this body, but also of its in-transparent decision making procedures, and in our view dysfunctional system of consultations through the so called regional groups. We welcome your initiative when it comes to considering ways to solving this issue, and we hope that this was the last year that this practice was again repeated."

*9 March, Republic of Korea, Ambassador In-kook Park*

"Before concluding the meeting I would like to share with you some thoughts and ideas on the issue of enhancement of the engagement of civil society in the work of the Conference. In particular on the current practice of addresses of women that participate in the International Women's Day seminar, presented to the Conference on Disarmament. As you recall, during the current session a great number of delegations expressed views that this year, such an address should be delivered to the Conference by the representative of women participating in this seminar. However, my extensive consultations on the issue has been inconclusive and

consequently, the address was once again read out by the President. Nevertheless, on the basis of my consultation, and in light of overwhelming support of member states to allow such case, I believe that the Conference could explore this issue further.

Against this backdrop, and also with your concurrence, I intend to cast the Friends of President, on behalf of P6, to explore best applicable practice for more constructive engagement of civil society in the work of the Conference, taking into consideration of practices in the United Nations and other organizations concerning the engagement of civil society in their work. The Friends of President are recommended to report on their result at the end of this year's session.”

*16 March, Group of 21*

“The G-21 wishes to recall that it had supported the proposal that a representative of the Women's League for Peace delivers their own statement in the CD on the occasion of International Women's Day. We regret that this was not the case. We look forward to future Presidencies making further efforts to redress this particular situation.”

## 7.2 Excerpt from Reaching Critical Will's CD Report 9 March

### NGO Engagement

"[D]espite all the support we have heard over the past several weeks, apparently it is not yet possible to have a female civil society leader address you from the floor in a statement delivered once a year on the occasion of International Women's Day," the President read from the NGO statement. "Although we are disappointed that we are unable to read our own statement, we see this as a testimony to the power of civil society and women's NGOs in particular."

South Africa recalled Security Council resolution 1325's mandate to include women in peace and security decision making, and the important role women play therein. "NGOs have long been called the conscience of the international community, but we also serve practical functions," explained the NGOs. "We offer numerous resources to you, we act as a liaison to the public, as a source for technical expertise, and as archives and institutional memory." Italy recognized the role NGOs play in disarmament and Sweden actually commented on the content of the NGO statement, which it found "useful and thought-provoking".

Ireland, who introduced the proposal to have the women's NGOs read their own statement, thought it inappropriate to celebrate International Women's Day by having the women in the gallery "seen but not heard." Norway called this "bizarre practice [...] as embarrassing as the general impasse is embarrassing"; Algeria said it was "not mature"; and Kenya called it "deplorable". In total, 11 delegations spoke in favor of the NGOs reading their own statement. Irish Representative Declan Smyth noted that no delegation had spoken against the proposal and, after thanking the US for distributing Secretary Rice's comments saluting International Women's Day, asked the US delegation for its views on the proposal.

In her distributed statement, US Secretary Rice said, "In countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, and throughout the broader Middle East, women are contributing to and leading democratic change that cannot be stopped."

Syria bemusedly observed that "the states that objected to such participation [in the CD] are the same states that daily call on us to step up participation of NGOs in matters related to democracy, human rights, peace and security. These states seem to wish NGOs to be tools of their own policy."

Ireland questioned the process by which the decision was made and Sweden attributed the situation to "intransparent decision-making procedures and dysfunctional consultations through regional groups." The Republic of Korea said that despite the large number of delegations in favor of the Irish proposal, his Presidential consultations were "inconclusive". Several states suggested the situation change next year and Kenya advised the CD to "revisit the rules of procedure if it is to remain credible."

In that regard, the Republic of Korea asked the Friends of the President to find the best applicable practice for more constructive engagement of civil society, taking into account the practices in other fora, and report on their findings at the end of the year. This is the Friends' first assignment following their initial mandate to work on a programme of work and working methods.

## **8. Closing Statement**

**Alexandra Sundberg, Disarmament Intern, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom**

### **Closing remarks**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you all for participating in this International Women's Day disarmament seminar. We've heard some great presentations, and had great discussions, and if you leave from here having learned at least half as much as I have, I think we can call today quite a success.

Tomorrow, the statement you have just heard Susi read will be delivered to the Conference on Disarmament. You can find the statement, as well as the other presentations given here today at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom's website, at [www.wilpf.int.ch](http://www.wilpf.int.ch). If you have any questions or comments about what has been said at the seminar; or how to get in touch with the speakers or other participants, please contact us at [marchseminar@wilpf.ch](mailto:marchseminar@wilpf.ch).

Finally, there may be a day marked in the calendar as International Women's Day, and we may hold a disarmament seminar on this particular day. Still, that shouldn't, and doesn't, limit women's and civil society's actions for peace to one single day in a year. There's just too much left to be done. So, let's all bring with us what we have discussed here today, and go back to our work to create a world we can actually be proud of being part of and passing on to the next generation.

Thank you.