



Governing Council
Item 11

CL/187/11(c)-R.1
25 August 2010

REPORTS ON RECENT IPU SPECIALIZED MEETINGS

**(c) PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON THE OCCASION OF THE
UN NON-PROLIFERATION TREATY REVIEW CONFERENCE**

(New York, 5 May 2010)

1. The Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was held at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 3 to 28 May 2010. The Conference attracted wide international attention, as the NPT is a landmark treaty whose objective is to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology, promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and complete disarmament. The NPT represents the only binding commitment in a multilateral treaty to the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon States.

2. On this occasion, the IPU, in collaboration with Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), organized a parliamentary meeting on 5 May, which was attended by legislators who had joined their national delegations to the main United Nations conference. On 6 May, an IPU-PNND panel discussion was held in the margins of the NPT Review Conference, and sought to bring a parliamentary perspective on the efforts currently under way towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.

3. The MPs were joined in their deliberations by the UN Secretary-General, who welcomed their initiatives and urged further action towards effective nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Other participants included Mr. T. Tóth, Executive Secretary of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Organization (CTBTO); Mr. S. Duarte, United Nations High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Senator D. Roche, Founding Chairman of the Middle Powers Initiative; and Mr. T. Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima.

4. This series of parliamentary initiatives on the occasion of the NPT Review Conference stemmed from the commitment expressed by IPU Member Parliaments in their 2009 resolution entitled *Advancing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and securing the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty: The role of parliaments*. The resolution, which was subsequently circulated at the UN General Assembly, includes a series of practical recommendations on what parliaments can and should do so as to ensure universal ratification of CTBT, promote the UN Secretary-General's five-point plan for nuclear disarmament, and support a number of concurrent steps such as reductions in nuclear stockpiles, establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones, and commencement of negotiations on a fissile materials treaty.

5. The parliamentary meeting at the United Nations provided an opportunity to review progress in follow-up to the IPU resolution, and assess good practices that have been developed, challenges that remain and opportunities ahead. Additional information, communicated by parliamentary delegations over the past months, was also shared with participants.

6. Legislators from Angola, China and Pakistan, for example, had shared their experiences in the adoption of national laws regulating the use, transport and transfer of nuclear technologies and materials according to international standards. Parliamentarians from Mongolia and New Zealand provided examples of legislation which criminalized domestic nuclear weapons activities. In Norway, parliament was able to develop legislation which divested government pension funds from corporations involved in the production of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Legislators from the Republic of Korea were keen to engage with Japanese and other legislators on proposals for regional denuclearization, including a North-East Asia nuclear-weapon-free zone.

7. At the regional level, the Namibian Parliament was recently involved in a regional workshop for the Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the CTBT. Australian MPs considered that there was scope for their parliament to do more, in light of its strong linkages to Asia, to promote non-proliferation and disarmament, both in terms of support for treaties from countries in the region and norms of nuclear restraint. For example, it was noted that particular benefit would be derived from Australian parliamentarians becoming more engaged with their counterparts in India on non-proliferation issues.

8. In terms of specific efforts to ensure the entry into force of the CTBT, the collaborative efforts among the parliaments of Austria and Costa Rica, through the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and the Article XIV Conference, were helping to accelerate the ratification process in Latin America and the Caribbean. MPs from Indonesia have also taken an interest in the expedited ratification of the CTBT, and the international community has applauded the recent announcement by the Indonesian Government of its intention to proceed in that direction. It was noted that, in recent inter-parliamentary settings, MPs from the nine Annex 2 States that have not yet ratified the CTBT had come forward to address their concerns and avenues they were willing to explore. That was a discussion that needed to continue with renewed energy, and from that perspective, the value of inter-parliamentary exchange and cooperation should not be underestimated.

9. In his intervention, the UN Secretary-General referred to the letter he had sent in February 2010 to all Speakers of Parliament, stressing the importance of a successful outcome to the NPT Review Conference this year, highlighting his five-point plan for nuclear disarmament, commending the IPU and PNND for their efforts and support, and encouraging parliamentarians to play an active role in helping achieve the objective of nuclear disarmament. Moreover, he welcomed the efforts by parliamentarians to advance the proposal for a nuclear weapons convention and encouraged parliamentarians to make further efforts to achieve a nuclear-weapon-free world.

10. The UN Secretary-General's decision to reach out to parliaments was based on his conviction that *"Parliamentarians and parliaments play a key role in the success of disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. Parliaments support the implementation of treaties and global agreements contributing to the rule of law and promoting adherence to commitments."* Similarly, in his message to the 122nd IPU Assembly in late March, Mr. Ban Ki-moon had noted that *"For several years now, thanks in no small measure to the efforts of parliamentarians and civil society, momentum has been building in our work for a world free of nuclear weapons. We need your support now to ensure success in May at the NPT Review Conference"*.

11. It was noted that parliamentarians around the world have been responding to this challenge. Parliamentary resolutions supporting a nuclear weapons convention, or the more comprehensive five-point plan of the UN Secretary-General, have been adopted in a number of parliaments, including those of Austria, Bangladesh, Costa Rica, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, and the European Parliament, and introduced in other parliaments such as those of Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

12. Some of the key themes and conclusions that emerged from the half-day parliamentary meeting on 5 May were presented before the plenary of the NPT Review Conference. These include the following:

- Politicians and diplomats alike should not underestimate the power of the growing momentum towards nuclear disarmament - and they should not hesitate to seize the moment and reach towards an unprecedented, historical breakthrough;
- Non-proliferation steps, such as nuclear-weapon-free zones and the CTBT, can play a key role in developing the institutional and technical components for a nuclear-weapon-free world, as long as they are developed with that end in mind and not as ends in themselves;
- Parliamentarians from countries in extended nuclear deterrence relationships have a vital role to support nuclear disarmament through phasing out the role of nuclear weapons in their security doctrines;
- Current barriers to nuclear disarmament could be overcome through commencing a preparatory process which would explore the legal, technical, institutional and political requirements for a nuclear-weapon-free world. This process could be guided, but would not be bound by, the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention circulated by the UN Secretary-General.
- The Nuclear Weapons Convention provides a non-discriminatory approach, which builds on currently existing mechanisms, such as the CTBTO and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and fills existing gaps.
- Nuclear disarmament can constitute an important part of disarmament for development by releasing resources that can be allocated to achieving the Millennium Development Goals
- Collaboration between legislators, governments and civil society is required to ensure success.
- Disarmament and peace education is vital to building political constituencies to support action by parliaments and governments for nuclear disarmament.

13. Also on 5 May, several MPs attended the screening at United Nations Headquarters of the independent documentary entitled *Countdown to Zero*. Previously featured at film festivals in Cannes and Sundance and yet to be released for the general public, the documentary seeks to raise awareness about the very real danger of a nuclear catastrophe - whether as a result of an accident, an act of terrorism, or as a consequence of an escalating nuclear crisis. Given the positive response to that initiative, it was suggested that the documentary also be presented to a high-level parliamentary audience, on the occasion of the 3rd World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (Geneva, July 2010).

14. Despite the fact that the two parliamentary meetings took place at the very beginning of the NPT Review Conference, sustained parliamentary efforts continued in the following weeks to persuade governments to reach a compromise on a substantive and meaningful outcome to the Conference. At the end of May, after intense negotiations, the States parties concluded the Review Conference with the unanimous adoption of an outcome document containing concrete practical steps to speed up progress on nuclear disarmament, advance non-proliferation and work towards achieving a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.