

Vienna Declaration and Action Plan: Overview

23 June 2022

The following briefing paper provides an overview of the Vienna Declaration and key actions agreed to at the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, in the Vienna Action Plan, adopted on 23 June 2022.

The Vienna Declaration

- States parties expressed their alarm and dismay at threats to use nuclear weapons, and condemned unequivocally “any and all nuclear threats, whether they be explicit or implicit and irrespective of the circumstances.”
- Affirming that the TPNW is needed more than ever in these circumstances, the states parties resolved to “move forward with its implementation, with the aim of further stigmatizing and de-legitimizing nuclear weapons and steadily building a robust global peremptory norm against them.”
- The Declaration reiterated the humanitarian basis of the treaty and the moral, ethical and security imperatives which inspired and motivated its creation and which now drive and guide its implementation.
- States parties resolved to move ahead with implementing all aspects of the treaty, including the positive obligations aimed at redressing the harm caused by nuclear weapons use and testing.
- They also reaffirmed the complementarity of the treaty with the international disarmament and nonproliferation regime, including the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), and undertook to continue to support the NPT and all measures that can effectively contribute to nuclear disarmament.
- The Declaration concluded that “In the face of the catastrophic risks posed by nuclear weapons and in the interest of the very survival of humanity ... We will not rest until the last state has joined the Treaty, the last warhead has been dismantled and destroyed and nuclear weapons have been totally eliminated from the Earth.”

Getting more countries to join the TPNW

Universalisation, (Article 12), Actions 1-14

- States commit to making universalisation a priority, including by:
 - Conducting diplomatic outreach visits with other countries that haven't joined yet (Action 3);
 - Appointing a government representative (contact point) responsible for this work in 60 days (Action 6);

- Highlighting the importance of the TPNW in statements at the UN and getting more countries to join UN General Assembly resolutions supporting the Treaty (Actions 8 & 9)
- Coordinating with all relevant partners including ICAN (Action 13)

Eliminating nuclear weapons

Towards the elimination of nuclear weapons (Article 4), Actions 15-18

- States agreed to set a deadline of 10 years for the elimination of nuclear weapons when nuclear-armed states join the TPNW and 90 days for the removal of weapons from host states when they join the Treaty.
- States agreed to pursue further discussion on designating the body that will be responsible for verifying nuclear disarmament (Action 15)

Helping people and places harmed by nuclear weapons

Victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance, (Articles 6 and 7), Actions 19-32

- All states agreed to steps to create a framework for implementation, including:
 - Closely consult with affected communities at all stages and engage with civil society and the UN system (Actions 19 & 24)
 - Establish a government representative (focal point) responsible for this work within 3 months and adopt any national laws to implement it (Actions 21 & 22)
 - Ensuring the principles of accessibility, inclusivity, non-discrimination throughout; as well as transparency and to consider a reporting format (Actions 25 & 28)
 - Examining how to establish an international trust fund to fund this work (Action 29)
- States that consider themselves affected by nuclear weapons use and testing agreed to:
 - Start reviewing the impacts of nuclear weapons use in their country by the second meeting (Action 30)
 - Develop a national plan to begin helping those impacted by nuclear weapons use and testing and to remediate the environment by the second meeting (Action 31)
- Other states also agreed to provide support, including financial and technical to states that consider themselves affected (Action 32)

Inclusion of civil society and particularly affected communities

Principles of inclusivity and cooperation among stakeholders in the implementation of the Treaty, Actions 39-42

- In addition to the references to inclusion throughout the outcome documents, there is a specific section of actions to ensure that this work is inclusive and transparent, including the following actions:

- Cooperate closely with the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, academia, affected communities and other civil society organisations (Action 40)
- Facilitate the active participation of relevant stakeholders, and take into account the different needs of people in affected communities and indigenous people and ensure strong ownership by all States Parties (Action 41)

Progressive approach to gender and disarmament

Implementing the Gender Provisions of the TPNW, Actions 47-50

- The Vienna Action Plan commits states to turn their commitment to gender equity to action, including by:
 - Appointing a Gender Focal Point to coordinate the implementation of gender provisions (Action 48)
 - Develop guidelines to ensure age- and gender-sensitive assistance for those harmed by nuclear weapons use and testing and integrate gender perspectives into international cooperation and assistance (Actions 49 & 50)

Sustaining the work

Decision on the establishment of an intersessional structure for the implementation of the Treaty and Additional Aspects of Support for Treaty Implementation, Actions 43-45

- States agreed to establish informal working groups to advance these actions and a committee to coordinate them, including civil society and to meet at least once every quarter.
- Informal working groups include:
 - One on universalization, co- chaired by South Africa and Malaysia;
 - One on victim assistance, environmental remediation; international cooperation and assistance, co-chaired by Kazakhstan and Kiribati;
 - And one on the implementation of Article 4, in particular work related to the future designation of (a) competent international authority(ies), co-chaired by Mexico and New Zealand.

Working with scientists and other UN treaties

Decision for the institutionalization of scientific and technical advice for the effective implementation of the Treaty (establishment of a scientific advisory group) and Institutionalizing scientific and technical advice for the effective implementation of the TPNW, Actions 33-34

- States decided to create a Scientific Advisory Group which will:

- Advise states parties and report regularly on the status and developments regarding nuclear weapons, nuclear weapon risks, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, nuclear disarmament, and related issues.
- Comprise of up to 15 members and take into account the need for a comprehensive spread of relevant fields of scientific and technological expertise, gender balance, and equitable geographical distribution

The relationship of the TPNW with the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, Actions 35-38

- States agreed the TPNW builds upon, contributes to and complements a rich and diverse disarmament and non-proliferation architecture and agreed on some steps to highlight this including:
 - Appointing an informal coordinator to articulate areas for cooperation between the TPNW and Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) (Action 36)
 - Cooperate with other international bodies, such as the IAEA and the CTBTO, in order to enhance cooperation (Action 37)