



**Asia Pacific Leadership Network for
Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament**

MEDIA RELEASE

ASIA PACIFIC LEADERS CALL FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION ON NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT

HIROSHIMA, 9 AUGUST 2015. Meeting in Hiroshima on the 70th anniversary of the indescribable horror of the world's first use of nuclear weapons, over thirty political, diplomatic, military and scientific leaders from fourteen Asia Pacific countries – including eleven former prime ministers, foreign and defence ministers – have issued a joint statement urging policymakers to urgently re-energize the nuclear disarmament agenda.

The APLN leaders statement (attached) expresses grave concern that the number of nuclear weapons in the Asia Pacific region is growing, that arms control efforts everywhere have stalled, that reliance on nuclear weapons in national security policy is if anything increasing, and that proliferation risks – despite the highly welcome Iran agreement – are growing in the region and worldwide.

The leaders argue that, despite this difficult environment, a world free of nuclear weapons is realistically achievable through a phased approach – involving immediate risk reduction (including de-alerting of weapons and universal commitment to **No First Use**), minimization of numbers, then final elimination – pursued in tandem with diplomatic efforts to improve regional and global security.

Endorsing the humanitarian impact initiative which has recently gained widespread support from non-nuclear weapon states and civil society, and recognizing that the NPT has failed to make progress toward nuclear disarmament, the statement urges like-minded states, to move now to negotiate a simple **Use Ban Convention** that prohibits any use of nuclear weapons by any state or non-state actor in any circumstances.

The APLN leaders argue that irrespective of whether any nuclear-armed state joins that Convention, it would be an important educational and advocacy tool for governments and civil society organizations – reinforcing understanding of the catastrophic human and environmental impact of any nuclear weapons use, and of the reality that the risks and costs of nuclear weapons in today's world far outweigh any deterrent utility they may have.

The statement makes clear that the final objective must be the negotiation and adoption of a comprehensive and universal **Nuclear Weapons Convention**, backed by effective verification and enforcement mechanisms, absolutely banning both use and possession.

Among many other recommendations, the leaders support continuing exploration of all ways and means to advance the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, including initiatives for the negotiation of a new **Nuclear Weapons Free Zone in North East Asia**, comprising Japan, North and South Korea, and Mongolia.

The Convenor of the group, former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, said in releasing the statement today in Hiroshima:

The nightmares of Hiroshima and Nagasaki forever remind us that nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminately inhumane ever devised, and – like chemical and biological weapons – have no defensible place in any country’s military arsenal.

It is critical that we recapture a sense of urgency about the scale and gravity of the risks posed by the world’s 16,000 remaining nuclear weapons. APLN leaders have shown the way in this very strong and sharply worded statement. It’s time for leaders to listen, and act.

About the APLN

The Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) is an advocacy group, formed in 2011, of former senior political, diplomatic and military and scientific leaders from around the region, from South Asia to East Asia and Australasia. The objective of the network is to inform and energize public opinion, and especially high-level policymakers, to take seriously the very real threats posed by nuclear weapons, and do everything possible to achieve a world in which they are contained, diminished and ultimately eliminated.

Media Enquiries

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