



**Statement by  
H.E. Mr. Max H. Rai  
Permanent Representative and Ambassador  
of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations**

**at the  
United Nations Conference  
to negotiate a legally-binding instrument  
to prohibit nuclear weapons,  
leading towards their total elimination**

**New York, 28 March 2017**

*"Check against delivery"*

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Madam President, Excellencies and Colleagues,

Papua New Guinea joins the International Community to call on all nuclear weapons states to immediately cease their nuclear rivalry and nuclear weapons build up.

Our common heritage, our planet, the only spot in the vast universe, capable of sustaining human life, as we know it, is already facing too many other challenges threatening its very own survival, such as climate change calamities induced by human activities, which is now affirmed by climate scientists.

Therefore, we, as responsible, non-nuclear nations of the world must not allow, a small number of nuclear weapon states to endanger our planet, and humanity's very own survival.

Madam President,

This conference is taking place at a time when there are so many conflicts around the world including military maneuvers and geo-political tensions especially in the East Asian region.

We are keenly watching the nuclear arms race amongst the nuclear powers. We are just hopeful that, nuclear powers can do humanity a great service by positive engagement amongst themselves to rid the world of all nuclear weapons intended for mass destruction, and convert it into more productive uses.

Any confrontational use of nuclear weapons by any two nuclear weapon states can only mean catastrophic consequences for mankind. This therefore is greater reason why nuclear disarmament is imperative, and this conference must pave the way for a new world order... and world with no nuclear weapons.

The existing nuclear and legal frameworks we have plus the worlds desire to reduce and ban nuclear weapons have not been successful so far including the impasse in the NPT Review in 2015. We applaud the UN General Assembly's approval for countries to engage in negotiations for the eventual and complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

In the spirit of the UN Charter, it is our common goal to ensure that there is a non-nuclear and safer world. The conclusion of this treaty is therefore inspired by our collective moral and ethical obligations to completely eliminate nuclear weapons.

Madam President,

Some of the countries in our region experienced years of living under nuclear tests. The horrific legacies of these tests are quite simply staggering with many people living with radioactive substances in their bodies. Large numbers of people will continue to die from the harmful effects of radiation. Horrific medical causes will also continue to be passed to future generations. There is no medical knowledge of the end to such hereditary disorders.

In the case of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, even after 70 years of the nuclear bombings, the medical legacies are still very difficult and unpleasant to understand today. The thought that the nuclear bombs possessed today are many times more powerful than the ones dropped on these two cities is in-comprehensible and frightening.

Yet, nuclear weapon states continue to spend billions to up-grade and modernize their nuclear weapons. If these resources can instead be diverted to social and humanitarian causes around the world, we would see a tremendous improvement in the quality of life for all humanity.

State's argue that having nuclear weapons is a deterrent to nuclear attacks from others. However, one can also argue that possession can be linked to their use on others. This therefore poses threat to the entire world.

It is imperative that the world therefore needs the collective efforts of all countries including the nuclear-weapon states to conclude such an arrangement to ensure that the world will be free of nuclear weapons.

I thank you.