

**Chair's summary at the conclusion of the
Workshop on Fostering Cooperation and Enhancing Consultation
Mechanisms among the existing nuclear-weapons-free zones
27-28 August 2024, Astana, Kazakhstan**

On the occasion of the 15th anniversary of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests, representatives of the Treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the Caribbean (Tlatelolco Treaty), the South Pacific (Rarotonga Treaty), South East Asia (Bangkok Treaty), Central Asia (Semipalatinsk Treaty) and Mongolia met on 27-28 August 2024 in Astana, in the Republic of Kazakhstan, for the purpose of contributing to the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons by strengthening nuclear-weapon-free zones. The meeting was also attended by observers from the Provisional Technical Secretariat for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as well as the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (P5). Civil society was represented by the Arms Control Association (ACA), the Blue Banner Research Center (BBRC), the Center for Energy and Security Studies (CENESS), the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), the Sokka Gakai International (SGI), the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) and the William and Mary Global Research Institute (W&M's GRI).

The opening session of the workshop was addressed by the Representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, the UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Kariybek Kuyukov, a nuclear-test survivor from the Semipalatinsk region. Presentations and exchange of experiences in past cooperation efforts were made by representatives of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone (CANWFZ) and Mongolia. In addition, statements were made by representatives of the CTBTO and IAEA, the chair of the General Assembly mandated process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other all other weapons of mass destruction, as well as BBRC, CENESS, VCNDP.

Presentations also were made by Mr. Alexander Kmentt, Director of the Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Department of Austria, and by Mr. Tariq Rauf, Independent Consultant, former Head of Verification and Security Policy Coordination, Office of External Relations and Policy Coordination, International Atomic Energy Agency.

The workshop was the second of its kind, following a similar event that took place in 2019 in support of the UN Secretary- Participants discussed the implementation of existing nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties since 2019, measures to strengthen implementation, progress on cooperation and coordination and prospects for the future, including the establishment of new nuclear-weapon-free zones.

7. Representatives agreed the practice of inviting representatives from other NWFZs to regional zone meetings, following the successful example of cooperation between OPANAL and AFCONE, should continue. This practice was highlighted as a way to reinforce collaboration and mutual learning between zones.

8. Representatives emphasized the urgent need for the signature and ratification of relevant protocols by the nuclear-weapon States to all NWFZs and for the removal of any interpretative declarations to those protocols, stressing that the provision of security assurances by the nuclear-weapon States is essential to the full of implementation of the zones. They called for continued diplomatic efforts, including in the capitals of concerned nuclear-weapon States, jointly where necessary or possible, to secure signatures and ratifications of the relevant protocols to NWFZ treaties by states that have not yet signed or ratified the protocols and for dialogue on interpretative declarations to the protocols. Joint outreach activities and demarches at the inter-parliamentary level were also discussed as a possible avenue for this purpose.

9. Representatives underscored the importance of intensifying efforts to promote the establishment of new NWFZs, with a special focus on regions such as the Arctic, Northeast Asia, and Central Europe. In particular, it was stressed that the ongoing efforts to establish a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction highlighted the critical need for regional cooperation and sustained diplomacy. The establishment of such zones, while complex, remains a key step in enhancing regional security and building global momentum for disarmament.

10. Representatives regretted the inability to convene the Fourth Conference of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones and Mongolia and noted the suggestion to organize a preparatory meeting in the margins of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly that could help address the obstacles to the convening of the Fourth Conference.

11. Representatives welcomed calls for further outreach efforts to promote disarmament education, particularly among young people. The important role of civil society in promoting NWFZs was also welcomed. Support was encouraged for research and analysis on key aspects of NWFZs, such as negative security assurances and interpretive Protocol declarations, to strengthen understanding and engagement.

12. Representatives underscored the importance of continued cooperation with both the IAEA and the CTBTO in ensuring compliance with non-proliferation commitments and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy were highlighted as essential to maintaining trust, transparency, and global non-proliferation norms. Collaboration with these organizations was emphasized as crucial for reinforcing the integrity of NWFZs and supporting international disarmament efforts.

