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Closing session of the NPT Prepcom in Vienna

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Nuclear weapons 'suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal'

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The **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN),** a global movement initiated by the Nobel-prize-winning International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, was launched internationally on the opening day of the 2007 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) meeting. It is due to conclude this afternoon.

VIENNA, AUSTRIA - "Nuclear weapons have provided us with the capacity of self-destruction. These weapons are suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal," commented Felicity Hill, coordinator of ICAN and former peace and security adviser for the United Nations. "We know - and have stressed time and again - that we can't cure nuclear war. But we certainly can prevent it."

"This NPT meeting got off to a shaky start because of procedural wrangling. But there has been a great deal of positive dialogue over the last few days, and no one should consider the meeting a failure," she said. "However, while disarmament is back on the table, so are new hydrogen bombs in the US and nuclear submarines in the UK. There has been too little discussion on the proposed US-India deal, although it has been challenged."

"One very positive development is that Costa Rica and Malaysia presented a working paper to encourage governments to begin negotiations for the early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention (NWC) - a law that would comprehensively ban nuclear weapons.

"A model NWC, prepared by a consortium of doctors, lawyers and disarmament experts, was submitted to the meeting as an official document. We have our fingers crossed that the idea will take flight, either in this forum or at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva," she continued.

"Such a convention is, in our view, the surest way to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons and to verify that elimination has occurred. The NPT itself envisages the goal of an NWC in Article VI.

"Governments have always been reluctant to act on such monumental issues as nuclear abolition without an irresistible groundswell of popular support. We must all realise our potential to effect positive change in this area.

"A powerful civil society movement aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons - once and for all - is our greatest hope for global survival. Indeed it may well be our only hope," remarked Felicity Hill, coordinator of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN), in Vienna, Austria, today.

"Now is the time to act. Holding off any longer could prove catastrophic. Complacency on this issue could mean the world ends in an afternoon," she concluded.

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Nuke disarmament back on the table: NGOs

VIENNA, AUSTRIA -

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"Procedural wrangling meant this year's nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) meeting was slow to begin. But we're optimistic now that some progress can be made over the coming year towards disarmament," said Anthony Salloum from the **Rideau Institute on International Affairs**, the global secretariat of Abolition 2000 - a network of non-government organizations (NGOs) committed to eliminating nuclear weapons.

Jacob Romer, a 17-year-old participant in Germany's **International Law Campaign**, said: "I will return home from this conference hopeful that we will one day rid the world of nuclear weapons, that rationality will prevail. But I regret to say that there is still much work to be done. The more time we waste, the sooner our world could be destroyed."

"Preventing the spread and use of nuclear weapons is fundamental to human security," said Dr Rebecca Johnson, editor of the London-based journal **Disarmament Diplomacy**. "Too many governments seem to lose sight of this fact when they get caught up in political games."

"A number of national delegations have treated the meeting as a sales bazaar, promoting the view that nuclear power is the solution to climate change," said Dr Jim Green from **Friends of the Earth (Australia).** "That view is indefensible at the best of times and completely unacceptable in a nuclear non-proliferation conference, given the inextricable links between nuclear power and weapons."

Felicity Hill from the **International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear weapons (ICAN)** commented: "The presence of NGOs at NPT meetings has always resulted in constructive outcomes. We are pleased that Costa Rica and Malaysia have presented a model nuclear weapons convention at this meeting. Our campaign is all about this treaty - which bans these suicidal, genocidal and ecocidal weapons."

Jennifer Nordstrom from the New York office of the **Women's International League for Peace and Freedom** said: "NGOs and governments have repeatedly demanded greater transparency at NPT meetings. We rose to this challenge by developing the Model Nuclear Inventory - a global database of nuclear weapons, fissile materials and nuclear policies - which we provided to delegates."

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