

Outcome of roundtable meeting on:
AFRICA'S ROLE IN MITIGATING THE CATASTROPHIC
HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

26 November 2014, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), Pretoria, South Africa

1. On 26 November 2014, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) co-hosted, with the regional office of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Oslo-based International Law and Policy Institute (ILPI) a diplomatic African roundtable on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and Africa's role in mitigating the catastrophic consequences of their use.
2. Participants included representatives of the following African countries: Benin, Burkina Faso, Comoros, DRC, Egypt, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Swaziland, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
3. Participants took note of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and the two international conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons (March 2013 in Oslo, Norway and February 2014 in Nayarit, Mexico), which provided a clearer understanding of the urgency for the elimination of all nuclear weapons and reaffirmed "the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law."
4. Participants further expressed hope that all African States would participate actively in the discussions during the Third Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in Vienna, Austria on 8-9 December 2014.
5. The following points were discussed and agreed upon by the states in the room, as suggested elements for national statements from African States during the General Debate at the Vienna Conference:
 - a. Reiterate the catastrophic immediate-, medium-, and long-term humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.
 - b. Underline the relevance for Africa of this issue; the threat from nuclear weapons is a shared concern, not only a matter for the nuclear-armed states; Africa will be equally, if not more, affected by the consequences of nuclear weapons.
 - c. Recall the contribution of the Pelindaba Treaty to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons; Africa's commitment to nuclear disarmament, and to fulfil the legal obligation under Article VI of the NPT.
 - d. Concerned by the diversion of vast public resources towards the maintenance and modernization of nuclear arsenals, while funds allocated towards the achievement of the millennium development goals are lacking.
 - e. Frustrated by lack of progress on nuclear disarmament; the risk associated with nuclear weapons underlines the need for urgent progress.
 - f. Support commencement of substantive work on a legally binding instrument for the achievement and maintenance of a world free of nuclear weapons.