

Greenpeace: Last chance for Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

Written by

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Tensions on the first day of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference currently being held in New York are threatening to derail the relevance of the treaty, Greenpeace warned today. "If the 2005 conference fails to reach consensus, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will exist in name only." Last chance for Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty

03 May 2005

New York , United states ? Tensions on the first day of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference currently being held in New York are threatening to derail the relevance of the treaty, Greenpeace warned today.

"Nuclear disarmament is at a crossroads," said Greenpeace International's Disarmament specialist, William Peden, who's attending the conference.

"If the 2005 conference fails to reach consensus, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will exist in name only."

This would leave the world faced with a potential catastrophic arms race in highly sensitive regions like the Middle East and the northeast Asia region.

"Statements by the US Assistant Secretary of State for Arms Control Stephen Rademaker, on his government's intentions to pursue Iran over their uranium enrichment activities, together with Iran's past resistance to transparency, are fuelling an atmosphere of sabre rattling that has potentially dangerous consequences for millions of people," according to Peden.

The situation in North Korea is equally critical. While the Bush administration promotes the concept of 'preventive war' and threatens the use of nuclear weapons, North Korea threatens to test its own nuclear weapons.

Currently there are between 30 and 40 countries with a nuclear weapons capability that could be converted into nuclear weapons within months.

"Moving all nation States away from possessing or aspiring to develop nuclear weapons must become a priority at this conference.

"The leadership of all the Nuclear Weapons States must now honour their obligations under the Non Proliferation Treaty and take concrete steps to eliminate their existing nuclear arsenals," concluded Peden.

Greenpeace supports UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's opening comments at the conference calling for both the US and Russia to make irreversible drastic cuts to their arsenals. While this is a welcome first step in the right direction, both countries must honour their past agreements and seriously start implementing rather than just talking about total disarmament.

Greenpeace is calling for the implementation of four major recommendations which it believes

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are essential to achieving the purposes of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament under the NPT:

(i) The States Parties to the NPT should reaffirm their unequivocal support for the decisions taken at the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences and further strengthen them at the 2005 NPT RevCon.

(ii) The States parties to the NPT should agree to an immediate moratorium on and a timetable for the complete phase out of uranium enrichment and nuclear reprocessing for civil and military purposes.

(iii) The NPT States Parties should agree to start negotiations immediately on a comprehensive and verifiable fissile material treaty at the Conference on Disarmament with the aim of ending all production, stockpiling and use, and reject the recommendations of the IAEA Expert Working Group on Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle and the US Department of Energy in particular.

(iv) The NPT States Parties should decide on a moratorium on all shipments of plutonium until the discriminatory nature of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) can be remedied.

Greenpeace is an independent campaigning organisation that uses non-violent creative confrontation to expose global environmental problems to force solutions that are essential to a green and peaceful future.