

## **UNYA SA Blue Paper**

### **Nuclear Weapon Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**

#### **Preamble**

As one of Australia's foremost youth-run volunteer organisations, the United Nations Youth Association of Australia (UNYA) is committed to formulating policy that strengthens the involvement and engagement of youth with pressing international issues. This is undertaken in the spirit of the United Nations, as a means of promoting peace, education and empowerment. UNYA believes that in a rapidly globalising world it is increasingly important that youth are aware of issues that are global in scale with very real local impacts. With this in mind, UNYA has chosen to address issues surrounding nuclear weapon non-proliferation and disarmament.

UNYA condemns the stockpiling, development and use of nuclear weapons (NW) and is deeply concerned by the lack of progress made in global nuclear weapon non-proliferation and disarmament. This paper will detail UNYA's position on these issues, its concerns, and actions that UNYA intends to undertake. This paper will not explicitly deal with issues surrounding nuclear energy.

#### **Nuclear Weapons in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

UNYA believes that an arsenal of approximately 27,000 NW<sup>1</sup> possessed by the US, Russia, China, France, the UK, India, Pakistan and possibly Israel, has no place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Numbers of NW increased in a Cold War world where a clash of ideologies triggered rampant proliferation, mostly in the US and former USSR. However, the international climate has changed considerably since then. Economic integration has increased states' interdependence. State sovereignty increasingly entails a consideration of global interests alongside national ones. Governance is evolving beyond the state to include organisations and processes at all

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<sup>1</sup> Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, *Weapons of Terror: Freeing the World of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Arms*, (Stockholm: WMDC, 2006) p. 60.

scales.<sup>2</sup> The nature of conflict itself is changing, moving beyond inter-state wars to civil conflicts, insurgencies and terrorism.

UNYA considers climate change, extreme poverty, international financial crises, environmental degradation and epidemics such as HIV/AIDS and malaria as some of the most important challenges of our time. These problems have taken on a global nature in terms of their scale and impact. This highlights the need for greater inter-state cooperation in order to solve or alleviate these problems that pose a severe threat to the progress of humanity. UNYA thinks that the possession of nuclear weapons by any state does not create the inter-state stability and trust that is a vital foundation of successful multilateral cooperation. Furthermore, UNYA believes that this cooperation needs occur coextensively with a greater strengthening of the United Nations, itself the premier platform for multilateral cooperation globally. To this end, UNYA calls for a revitalisation of the nuclear weapons non-proliferation and disarmament process, the roots of which are in the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

UNYA believes that a further imperative for the revitalisation of non-proliferation and disarmament lies in the existential threat that NW pose on a daily basis. Testing and use of NW in the South Pacific, Maralinga, Hiroshima and Nagasaki have clearly demonstrated the devastating consequences. The effects of NW are highly indiscriminate and reach across time and space. Furthermore, thousands of weapons are on 'hair-trigger' alert status, meaning that they can be fired within minutes.<sup>3</sup> UNYA considers non-proliferation and disarmament to be unequivocally in the global interest, and in the interest of every individual.

- UNYA condemns the stockpiling, development and use of nuclear weapons for any purpose.
- UNYA strongly supports nuclear weapons non-proliferation and disarmament, and anticipates a nuclear weapons-free world in the future.

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<sup>2</sup> Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: a critical introduction*, (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 185.

<sup>3</sup> Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, pp. 90-1.

- UNYA believes that the division of the world into nuclear weapon ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’ does not lead to the inter-state cooperation needed to address urgent global problems.
- UNYA strongly believes that NW pose a great risk to humanity and that eventual complete nuclear disarmament should be an overarching goal for the international community.

## **International Treaties and other Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Instruments**

UNYA believes that the wide array of existing international treaties, commissions and organisations concerned with non-proliferation and disarmament provides a solid framework for negotiations, albeit with some shortcomings. States parties have taken significant steps under this framework. UNYA is of the opinion that every effort should be made to strengthen the existing measures and to formulate new ones where necessary.

### *The Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)*

The NPT was brought into force in 1970. Five states parties – the US, the UK, the Russian Federation, France and China – are recognised nuclear weapon states (NWS) under the treaty. These states are obligated under Article VI of the treaty to negotiate in good faith towards disarmament.<sup>4</sup> UNYA believes that the NPT is valuable in setting important international norms surrounding the development and use of nuclear weapons, and obligations on all states to pursue the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. However, states parties have consistently failed to fully meet their disarmament obligations and as yet, no treaty on general and complete disarmament has been successfully negotiated. Furthermore, two states that possess nuclear weapons, India and Pakistan, and Israel (whose nuclear status is ambiguous) remain outside of the treaty. Proliferation continues as states improve their existing weapons, or as clandestine networks such as the A. Q. Khan network provide technology and knowledge to non-nuclear weapons states.

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, *Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*, 1968.

Despite these failings, UNYA believes that the fault lies not with the spirit or wording of the NPT itself, but with the willingness of states parties to comply. UNYA believes that the lack of confidence building measures, among others, has made it more difficult for states to cooperate on these matters. This being said, UNYA believes that the NPT is an essential part of the non-proliferation and disarmament processes and that it should not be seen as completely redundant.

*International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)*

UNYA believes that the IAEA has played a vital role as the chief body responsible for nuclear safeguards. Safeguards are activities carried out by the IAEA that verify whether states are using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, or whether those resources are being diverted towards military programmes.<sup>5</sup> The adoption of the Additional Protocol in 1997 increased the IAEA's detection capabilities, however at October 2008, only 88 states had entered it into force in their territories.<sup>6</sup> UNYA supports the activities of the IAEA and believes that, by obliging states to be forthcoming about their nuclear programmes, it provides valuable confidence building capacity that fosters non-proliferation and disarmament. Furthermore, UNYA anticipates that the Additional Protocol will enter into force universally as a minimum standard of safeguards verification.

*(The Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty)*

*(The Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission (WMDC))*

*(The UN)*

*(Nuclear Weapons Convention)*

**Australia's Role in Non-Proliferation and Disarmament**

UNYA believes that, as a 'middle power' and a generally respected state, Australia has an important role to play in mediating and progressing non-proliferation and disarmament. Thus far, the Australian Government has shown that it has been

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<sup>5</sup> Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission, pp. 51-3.

<sup>6</sup> 'Safeguards and Verification', The International Atomic Energy Agency, 28 Nov. 2008, <[http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/SV/Safeguards/sg\\_protocol.html](http://www.iaea.org/OurWork/SV/Safeguards/sg_protocol.html)>.

willing to do so. In 1995, the then Prime Minister, Paul Keating, initiated the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. The Commission's 1996 report detailed practical steps towards eventual complete disarmament such as de-alerting weapons and ending testing. Furthermore, it urged that these steps be taken by the five nuclear weapon states as soon as possible.<sup>7</sup> The steps put forward by the Commission also provided a foundation for (and were echoed by) the "Thirteen Practical Steps for Nuclear Disarmament" agreed at the 2000 Review Conference of the NPT.<sup>8</sup> UNYA considers this to be a very valuable contribution on Australia's behalf.

More than a decade after the Canberra Commission, the Australian and Japanese governments have jointly initiated the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND). The ICNND will be co-chaired by former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and former Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi. The stated aim of the ICNND is to reinvigorate non-proliferation and disarmament, in view of the upcoming NPT Review Conference in 2010.<sup>9</sup> UNYA welcomes these new efforts and anticipates that the Australian Government will continue to show leadership in non-proliferation and disarmament. At the same time, UNYA hopes that the findings of the ICNND will be matched by real commitments and action on the part of those states possessing nuclear weapons.

UNYA supports further measures that the Australian government has implemented. These include membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), which obliges member states to place export controls on material that could be used for military nuclear programmes, in accordance with the NSG Guidelines.<sup>10</sup> UNYA believes that this is of significance, given the fact that Australia is a large exporter of uranium. UNYA anticipates that the Australian government will endeavour to ensure

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<sup>7</sup> 'The Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons', CCNR, 28 Nov. 2008, <<http://www.ccnr.org/canberra.html>>.

<sup>8</sup> Jayantha Dhanapala, 'The Canberra Commission: Lessons Learned for a Future Commission', United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, 28 Nov. 2008, <<http://disarmament.un.org/speech/18may2002.htm>>.

<sup>9</sup> International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, 28 Nov. 2008, <<http://www.icnnd.org/index.html>>.

<sup>10</sup> 'What are the guidelines?', Nuclear Suppliers Group, 28 Nov. 2008, <<http://www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org/guide.htm>>.

that Australian uranium is used for peaceful purposes and that it does not contribute to proliferation. Furthermore, UNYA strongly supports the Treaty of Rarotonga, of which Australia is a signatory, which has established a Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone in the South Pacific.<sup>11</sup>

Finally, UNYA welcomes the recently launched inquiry by the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties into Australia's involvement in treaties relating to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.<sup>12</sup> It is hoped that the findings of the Committee will contribute to and compliment the work being carried out by the ICNND. Furthermore, UNYA anticipates that the Committee's work will contribute to greater international cooperation in these matters and strengthened commitments by states parties, leading to significant outcomes at the next NPT Review Conference in 2010.

- UNYA urges the Australian Government to continue its leadership role in nuclear weapon non-proliferation and disarmament.
- UNYA commends the Australian Government's previous initiative, the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.
- UNYA welcomes the newly formed International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, a joint initiative of the Australian and Japanese governments.
- UNYA anticipates that the Australian government will ensure that the Australian uranium industry will not fuel further proliferation and instability.
- UNYA awaits with interest the findings of the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties.

### **Civil Society**

UNYA strongly advocates the continued and strengthened involvement of civil society in non-proliferation and disarmament. UNYA is disappointed by the seeming

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<sup>11</sup> 'Nuclear Weapon Free Zones', Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 28 Nov. 2008, <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/security/nwzfz.html>>.

<sup>12</sup> See website at [http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/nuclearnon\\_proliferation/index.htm](http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jsct/nuclearnon_proliferation/index.htm).

lack of will on the behalf of the governments of the NWS to disarm, but UNYA believes that civil society is well placed to hold states accountable to their obligations. Importantly, UNYA recognises that several challenges face civil society action. Firstly, civil society is made up of many different interest groups, from NGOs to business, which have disparate aims. Secondly, existing groups that are opposed to NW can often end up competing rather than cooperating. Thirdly, there is a dearth of awareness about NW in the general community, which can be an obstacle to garnering support. For civil society action to be efficient, UNYA believes that there needs to be greater public awareness about NW (see Education section below) and coordination between groups, both nationally and internationally. Moreover, a compelling and convincing case for non-proliferation and disarmament needs to be presented to all sectors of civil society.

As a youth organisation, UNYA strongly supports the inclusion of young people in non-proliferation and disarmament processes. As it stands, youth have been noticeably absent from the debate over NW over the past decade. UNYA believes that youth can make a valuable contribution towards a nuclear weapons-free world. The youth of today will eventually step into leadership roles, effectively ‘inheriting’ the world’s nuclear arsenal. This makes it imperative for youth to see greater progress in non-proliferation and disarmament, soon. They also have a ‘global consciousness’, and as such are genuinely concerned about global problems like NW. Young people today are much more likely to see themselves as stakeholders in a global problem, in much the same way as they have mobilised against poverty and climate change. Furthermore, UNYA believes that youth organisations have intrinsic value in being able to educate other youth. Where there may be a communication barrier between different generations, young people will be able to successfully transmit messages to their peers through the use of youth-specific language and media.

UNYA supports a multi-faceted approach to civil society advocacy about non-proliferation and disarmament. UNYA believes that successful programmes of public awareness and action must be met with engagement at the political level if real change is to be achieved. Politicians at state and federal levels, as well as key policy makers should be focused on. Credible and popular public figures should also be

coopted as spokespeople as a way of increasing awareness. Here it must be stressed again that coordination and cooperation within civil society is imperative for efficiency and lasting results.

- UNYA believes that civil society has a vital role to play in non-proliferation and disarmament.
- UNYA strongly supports the involvement of youth in advocacy.
- UNYA believes that civil society groups need to coordinate their plans and cooperate in advocating non-proliferation and disarmament.
- UNYA advocates a multi-faceted policy approach, targeting both the general public and key political figures.

## **Education**

UNYA is concerned by the lack of awareness in ‘mainstream’ society and the media about nuclear weapons. Reports in the media of alleged proliferation in Iran and the testing of a NW by North Korea briefly brought the dangers of NW to the public’s attention, however the media rarely features stories about other established NWS. UNYA believes that civil society at large will only become more engaged in non-proliferation and disarmament once awareness grows. It has been shown that when people are more informed, they are more likely to take an interest in issues. This is in line with UNYA’s goals of education and empowerment. With this principle in mind, UNYA considers public education to be a vital part of strengthening civil society involvement. UNYA advocates that the core messages of any educational material should focus on these specific issues:

- i. How many NW exist, how many are ready to be used and which states possess them. Material should demonstrate that the threat of NW is real and relevant, but that the situation can still be brought under control with appropriate action.
- ii. "the danger that NW in the possession of any state (not only those designated 'rogue' nations) pose".
- iii. The consequences of NW testing and use, with examples (for example, from the South Pacific or Japan).

- iv. Simple steps for action that individuals or groups can take, with contact details for organisations that have a stake in non-proliferation and disarmament.
- v. Truthful information about nuclear power, outlining the links between power generation and proliferation if preventative measures are not taken.
- vi. Simple information about how NW work.

UNYA proposes that education about NW should be targeted at all age groups, in particular primary school and high school students so that people can gain an understanding of NW from an early age. Older demographics, as the groups with the greatest influence and ability to take action, should also be targeted with simple messages disseminated through appropriate media. Furthermore, UNYA believes that both State and Federal levels of government should be involved in the dissemination of educational material and messages. However, so that the material remains apolitical, UNYA proposes that it should be formulated by a third party, such as a NGO. Existing organisations such as the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) have extensive educational materials that could be drawn upon for this purpose.<sup>13</sup>

UNYA also believes that a greater awareness and understanding of international issues and conflict resolution, along with empathy for others from all cultures, will equip coming generations with the ability to move beyond a world of nuclear stand-off. UNYA's Model United Nations Conferences (MUNs) offer the opportunity for secondary and tertiary students to do this. Delegates learn valuable negotiation and debating skills that allow them to peacefully problem-solve just as well in the real world as in the MUN setting. They also learn to be good communicators, which is an invaluable tool. Furthermore, delegates must be able to accurately represent their chosen country and be sensitive to the differences of other participants, thus fostering empathy and understanding.

- UNYA is concerned by the lack of awareness of NW and believes that this needs to be rectified through extensive public education programmes.

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<sup>13</sup> See ICAN website at [www.icanw.org](http://www.icanw.org)

- UNYA believes that greater awareness of NW will lead to greater public engagement in non-proliferation and disarmament.
- UNYA advocates the use of simple yet powerful messages, targeted at all age groups using appropriate media.
- UNYA supports the inclusion of both governments and NGOs in education about NW.
- UNYA believes that MUNs are important because they educate delegates about peaceful conflict resolution, a principle that underpins non-proliferation and disarmament.

### **Actions**

In response to the concerns outlined above, UNYA undertakes to:

- Make a submission in January 2009 to the Joint Standing Committee on Treaties inquiry about Australia's involvement in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament treaties.
- **Further actions to be finalised.**