Joint Statement on behalf of Kiribati and Kazakhstan
2023 NPT Preparatory Committee
General Debate
Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Teburoro Tito
31 July 2023

Chair,

I am delivering a statement on behalf of Kiribati and Kazakhstan.

At the ouset, our two delegations would like to congratulate you on presiding over the first Preparatory Committee of the new NPT Review cycle. Please be assured that both delegations are at your disposal, and we wish you the best of luck as you assume the duties as chair.

Chair,

Kazakhstan and Kiribati are two States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) that have experienced the catastrophic humanitarian and environmental impacts of nuclear weapons. We recall that more than 350 nuclear weapons tests were conducted in the Pacific Ocean region and 468 nuclear explosions were conducted in Kazakhstan.

Due to the shared experiences of both states, at the Tenth NPT Review Conference, we underscored the need for the Nuclear-Weapon States to fully adhere to their Article VI commitments and advocated that they attempt to do justice to the victims of nuclear weapons-related activities through compensatory measures.

Chair,

We also recall that the final outcome document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference underscored that the States Parties expressed deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. It also reaffirmed the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law.

We also underscore the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice.

Following the historic declaration on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, four conferences on the humanitarian impact were held, where testimonies and presentations from both survivors and experts were highlighted. Their contributions advanced an understanding of the impact of nuclear weapons, including the harmful effects of the development, testing, and use of nuclear weapons, as well as the gendered and disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls.

Complementing the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), adopted by 122 states in 2017, adds a new dimension of international cooperation to assist victims of such testing and help remediate contaminated environments. In this regard, we are proud to be the co-chairs of the intersessional working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation, international cooperation, and assistance.

Chair,

Championing the global movement to provide nuclear justice to the victims of nuclear testing from all applicable countries and regions around the world, we spearheaded efforts to include language on engaging with affected communities and environmental remediation at the 10th NPT Review Conference.

We recall the strong references from the draft reports for the international community to interact with survivors and communities affected by nuclear weapons use and testing, who can directly share their experiences of the humanitarian and environmental impact within the context of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation education. The conference also welcomed the increased attention in the last review cycle on assistance to the people and communities impacted by nuclear weapons use and testing and environmental remediation following nuclear use and testing. The conference called on States Parties to engage with such efforts to address nuclear harm. We also underscored the need for governments and international organizations, which have expertise in the field of clean-up and disposal of radioactive contaminants, to consider giving appropriate assistance, as may be requested, for remedial purposes in affected areas.

Chair,

We contend that Nuclear-Weapon States must recognize the necessity of helping victims of nuclear weapons and remediating contaminated environments. In this regard, we urge the Nuclear-Weapon States and their allies to support nuclear justice initiatives in order to address the nuclear harm from the past development, testing and use of nuclear weapons.

There must also be recognition of the responsibilities of the Nuclear-Weapon States, as well as those States that rely on defense arrangements based on nuclear weapons, of the humanitarian and environmental consequences and impact of nuclear weapons-related activities.

We urge the Nuclear-Weapon States to also recognize that beyond the physical harm caused by nuclear weapons and long-term genetic disturbances, victims also continue to experience post-traumatic stress disorders and other forms of trauma, as well as disruptions to cultural practices, displacement, and environmental damage on a long-term or permanent basis as a result of nuclear testing and maintenance.

We request the Nuclear-Weapon States to provide adequate financial compensation and engage in information exchanges with States Parties whose territories served as test sites.

The exchange of scientific and technical information is an important component of any framework for cooperation. States Parties and other actors should also share information with affected states parties regarding the potential effects of nuclear contamination and types of responses. These measures would help address both humanitarian and environmental damages caused by nuclear test explosions; and thereby help the victims of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.