



**Statement by H.E. Archbishop Gabriele Caccia  
Head of Delegation of the Holy See  
Third Meeting of States Parties to the  
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons  
General Exchange of Views  
4 March 2025**

Mr. President,

At the outset, my Delegation wishes to congratulate you on your election as President of the Third Meeting of States Parties (3MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

As we mark the 80th anniversary of the first nuclear test in New Mexico, and the subsequent deployment of atomic bombs on the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is imperative to acknowledge the unparalleled suffering caused by these weapons of mass destruction. The profound and enduring negative effects of these events continue to resonate across generations, leaving indelible marks on those who survived and the communities that were irrevocably altered. The immeasurable toll that the use of such weapons has had on humanity is recognized, not only in terms of the immediate loss of life, but also in the long-term psychological, cultural and environmental consequences. My Delegation offers its profound respect to the victims whose lives were tragically lost and whose futures were irrevocably disrupted by these instruments of death.

It is the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure that the atrocities of the past are not repeated, and that future generations are protected from the catastrophic consequences of nuclear warfare.

With this profound sense of urgency and shared commitment, it is deeply troubling to observe the growing rise of conflict and division around the world. Geopolitical divisions and tensions in the international arena have led to a worrying resurgence of deterrence-based rhetoric, which in turn has reignited the dangerous specter of nuclear threats.

This growing sense of mistrust and fear is having a detrimental effect on international relations, with the result that the disarmament architecture is being severely undermined, while military expenditures are rising

dramatically. Too many States are increasingly redirecting valuable resources towards military stockpiling, funds that could instead be used to tackle urgent global challenges, including poverty and hunger. This shift in priorities is deeply concerning, as it diverts attention from the fundamental need for human integral development and peace.

*“In order to make peace a reality, we must move away from the logic of the legitimacy of war: if this were valid in earlier times, when wars were more limited in scope, in our own day, with nuclear weapons and those of mass destruction, the battlefield has become practically unlimited, and the effects potentially catastrophic. The time has come to say an emphatic ‘no’ to war, to state that wars are not just, but only peace is just: a stable and lasting peace, built not on the precarious balance of deterrence, but on the fraternity that unites us”.*<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, it is imperative that a re-evaluation of current priorities takes place, with investments directed towards a paradigm of peace and security defined by fraternity, as opposed to deterrence and military escalation.

Mr. President,

Amidst the numerous challenges and alarming trends currently prevailing on the global stage, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) stands as a beacon of hope and progress. With its legally binding provision for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the TPNW fills a critical gap in the global disarmament architecture. At the same time, it is imperative to emphasize that the TPNW and existing disarmament treaties are complementary and mutually reinforcing, as these instruments must operate in synergy to establish a more secure global environment. In this regard, my Delegation welcomes the participation of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) in this meeting. Any future verification regime within the TPNW framework to ensure the irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons should be based on established safeguards, such as the Additional Protocol, and take into account the valuable lessons learned from other disarmament and arms control initiatives.

Furthermore, my Delegation wishes to reaffirm the importance of the TPNW as the first international instrument to explicitly recognize the profound humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons. In this regard, the Holy See appreciates the ongoing scientific

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<sup>1</sup> Pope Francis, Address to the Security Council of the United Nations, 14 June 2023.

progress in deepening our understanding of the far-reaching effects of nuclear weapons on human health, the environment and future generations. In particular, my Delegation acknowledges the valuable contributions of the Scientific Advisory Group and welcomes the adoption of the Resolution on “Nuclear War Effects and Scientific Research”, as a crucial step in furthering scientific research and raising global awareness of the devastating consequences of nuclear warfare.

Mr. President,

Allow me to conclude with the word of Pope Francis, who, reflecting on the Hibakusha, stated that they “*keep alive the flame of collective conscience, bearing witness to succeeding generations to the horror of what happened in August 1945 and the unspeakable sufferings that have continued to the present time. Their testimony awakens and preserves the memory of the victims, so that the conscience of humanity may rise up in the face of every desire for dominance and destruction. We cannot allow present and future generations to lose the memory of what happened here. It is a memory that ensures and encourages the building of a more fair and fraternal future*”.<sup>2</sup>

Thank you, Mr. President.

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<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, Message for the Celebration of the 53<sup>rd</sup> World day of Peace, 1 January 2020.