



International Physicians
for the Prevention of Nuclear War

September 3, 2009

President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama,

We understand that you will preside over a special Security Council session on nuclear disarmament on September 24. This extremely important session comes at a time when the world is looking to your leadership, and to that of the United States, in setting a meaningful, practical, and bold agenda for ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

You said two things in Prague on April 5: that you intended to seek “the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons” and that you feared this might not be achievable in your lifetime.

We fully and enthusiastically support you in the goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world, and we pledge to work with you and with the rest of the international community to achieve it. Moreover, we are convinced that if the other nuclear weapon states can be engaged in a good faith effort to eliminate nuclear weapons and do not put short-sighted obstacles in the path of that goal, it will be achieved sooner than anyone thinks is possible.

The number and the stature of world leaders who are calling for negotiations on a Nuclear Weapons Convention or some similar framework of agreements that would abolish nuclear weapons under international law has grown exponentially since a Model Convention was first introduced to the UN as a working document in 1997. Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon, who has proposed an international conference to jumpstart negotiations on a Convention, is among them.

We are proud of the fact that the Model NWC was drafted by NGOs comprising international lawyers, scientists, and physicians, and we respectfully recommend it to your attention. A thorough and open-minded discussion of the need for a comprehensive nuclear disarmament initiative within the Security Council, led by the President of the United States, would establish a tone and a set of expectations for serious progress unlike anything we have seen in decades.

At the time of your meeting with President Medvedev in March, IPPNW and our US affiliate, Physicians for Social Responsibility, sent you a letter signed by more than 300 prominent physicians from 39 countries, urging you to work with Russia and the other nuclear weapon states to negotiate a Nuclear Weapons Convention. We enclose another copy of that appeal, as a reminder of the worldwide support you have for the goal you have embraced.

We applaud the steps you have already taken to reduce the world’s nuclear danger, and we urge you to challenge the Security Council to demand a comprehensive, accelerated plan for the global elimination of nuclear weapons from the UN member states.

Sincerely,

Ime John, Sergey Kolesnikov and Vappu Taipale
Co-Presidents