

UN Secretary-General supports ICAN's Nuclear Abolition Day

NEW YORK – This Saturday thousands of people will take part in 50 simultaneous actions in 25 countries as a response to the Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference, which concluded last Friday. The demonstrators aim to build public and political support for the negotiation of a comprehensive treaty banning nuclear weapons – a nuclear weapons convention.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon today released a video message of support to those who are participating in the global day of action. “I know how hard you work. It’s not easy to swim against the tide. But the tide is turning. People everywhere are rejecting nuclear weapons,” he said.

Mr Ban first expressed support for a Nuclear Weapons Convention in October 2008. During last month’s review of the NPT, more than two-thirds of all states called for such a treaty. However, four of the nuclear-weapon states – the United States, Russia, France and the United Kingdom – were unwilling to support the idea of a nuclear weapons ban.

Mr Ban said today: “Critics and sceptics cannot imagine a world without nuclear weapons. People said the same about the struggle for civil rights and the fight against slavery. These were changes that also seemed impossible until they happened. The movement to abolish nuclear weapons is on the right side of history. We will continue to fight for this great cause.”

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), which represents more than 200 non-government organizations, is coordinating the day of action. In Australia, actions will take place in Brisbane, Fremantle, Launceston and Melbourne.

“The future of humanity can only be free in a world without nuclear weapons. There is no other way. It must be completed urgently, before our luck runs out,” said Associate Professor Tilman Ruff, Chair of ICAN.