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30 March 2012

Mr Tim Wright, Campaign Director
ICAN
G3/60 Leicester Street
Carlton VIC 3053

Dear Mr Wright,

RE: POSITION OF SLOVENIA ON NUCLEAR WEAPON CONVENTION

Allow me first to sincerely thank you for your letter of 22 March 2012 regarding the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Testing, Production, Stockpiling, Transfer, Use and Threat of Use of Nuclear Weapons and on Their Elimination. I would like to present Slovenia's position on this highly important issue.

At the very outset, I must reiterate our unwavering support for all international efforts to address the goal of the world free of nuclear weapons. We strongly encourage all those determined to do their utmost to comprehensively and irreversibly eliminate all nuclear weapons and the means of their delivery from our planet. We believe that the role of civil society in this process is invaluable and could be crucial for our final success. We highly value the role of ICAN and other non-governmental organisations. Your efforts aimed at reminding the international community of the weight of this issue for the entire human race are crucial and include raising public awareness and encouraging political leaders to stay focused on this urgent part of the international community's agenda.

Slovenia believes that the road to our ultimate goal – a world free of nuclear weapons – will be long. First of all, the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), the cornerstone of international peace and security, should be made universal. All attempts of nuclear weapons proliferation must be prevented, and the right to a peaceful use of nuclear energy preserved. In this light, it is vital that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enters into force as soon as possible. Our immediate goal is for all Annex II countries to ratify the CTBT. Effective and universal implementation of the CTBT is essential. The international community must also immediately undertake negotiations on the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), another important landmark on our path towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Once concluded, the FMCT will comprehensively prohibit the production of fissile

materials used for nuclear warheads. All existing zones free of nuclear weapons, including the one in the Middle East, must be made operational.

We are not certain that the moment is ripe to start negotiations on the Convention on the comprehensive prohibition of nuclear weapons. The initiative should be given appropriate time to mature. Before opening negotiations on the Convention, the international community should meet the above goals first, complete negotiations on the FMCT, and make the NPT and the CTBT universal.

Our voting pattern on the Convention in the UN General Assembly is also the result of the fact that the resolution – the text of which has remained unchanged for years – in its operative paragraph 1 requires the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva *“to commence negotiations in order to reach agreement on an international convention prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.”*

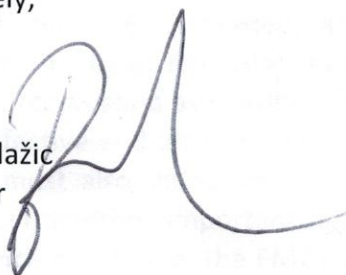
Slovenia's first priority within the Conference on Disarmament (CD) is an early start of negotiations on the FMCT, which will, once enforced, complement the NPT and the CTBT and make a giant leap ahead towards our common objective. The CD has seen tremendous efforts of many countries to conclude a Program of Work. The start of negotiations on the FMCT is a key component of the CD's Program of Work, which was adopted on 29 May 2009, after several years of serious negotiations. Unfortunately, it has never been implemented. However, we see the above resolution on the prohibition of nuclear weapons as a potential obstacle, hindering our long-standing efforts to adopt the CD's Program of Work, for which we have been striving for years. At least 47 other countries from all over the world share this view.

We should also pay due regard to the fact that the Convention does not fit the programme of the process towards a world free of nuclear weapons, agreed at the NPT Review Conference in 1995. It was then decided that the NPT, the CTBT and the FMCT should be the absolute priority of the international community in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Notwithstanding the above, Slovenia does not object to the future of the Convention, which fits well into the framework of nuclear disarmament. We sincerely hope that the international community will find an adequate format and a forum that will properly address this important initiative. I am confident that we will find a way to focus our efforts on our ultimate goal shared by ICAN, notably a world free of nuclear weapons.

Your sincerely,

Dr Milan Balažič
Ambassador

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'M' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke.