

8 March 1985: Messages sent by Conference Participants, Comments on Statement in the CD

1. Message to the Conference on Disarmament

On this International Women's Day, we women from different countries who have met in Geneva to examine how we can contribute most effectively to the World Disarmament Campaign wish to address a message to you, the members of the Conference on Disarmament.

We turn to you in our conviction that the Conference on Disarmament - the only multilateral disarmament negotiating forum - must urgently take steps to help free humanity from the threat of nuclear annihilation and from the dangerous consequences of the continuing arms build-up including the horrific effects of the nuclear tests and the suffering and deprivation caused by misuse of resources on armaments. We are angry that the amount which could feed humanity for one year is now spent on the arms race in one day.

The prevention of nuclear war and progress in the negotiations for arms control agreements leading to general and complete disarmament have become the primary concerns of women the world over. Women have marched thousands of kilometers, have organised mass rallies, peace camps, conferences and mass campaigns to manifest their opposition to the arms race and to raise awareness of people to the danger this has for our globe.

We expect our governments to take concrete measures for disarmament that will reverse the dangerous situation we are in. We expect the Conference on Disarmament to negotiate vigorously in the coming months to conclude agreements that will curb the arms build-up and, for the first time, lead to true disarmament.

Although we consider that all items on the agenda of the Conference are of great importance, we urge the Members to concentrate their efforts on reaching agreements in the following areas which we consider to be the most urgent tasks facing humankind today:

(i) The prevention of nuclear war - to negotiate on the basis of the papers put forth in the last year's session of the Committee on Disarmament by the Non-Aligned, Socialist and Western groups.

(ii) A comprehensive test ban - to conclude a treaty on the prohibition of testing nuclear weapons in all environments by the end of this session given the fact that negotiations had already reached a very advanced stage in the tripartite negotiations. This treaty should be signed by all states possessing nuclear capacity.

(iii) The prevention of an arms race in outer space - to negotiate a treaty or treaties preventing an arms race in outer space and to call on the governments mostly concerned to observe a moratorium on all research, development and testing until such a treaty or treaties is or are concluded.

(iv) The conclusion of a treaty banning the development, production and stockpiling of chemical weapons, and the destruction of existing stockpiles.

We come from organisations which together represent millions of women the world over. We demand that you, Members of the Conference on Disarmament, exercise the needed political will to negotiate and reach agreements that will remove the threat of the destruction of all life now hanging over us all.

2. Declaration to the Government Members of the United Nations

We women, making up more than half of the world's population, reject the arms race and the theory of deterrence behind it. It will take us inevitably to a global catastrophe if not stopped now. The arms race consumes resources desperately needed to meet human needs. Its effects on economy, environment, and people in industrialised and developing countries are disastrous. Millions of women, men and children have been and are being killed and maimed in local and regional conflicts which threaten to erupt into global nuclear war. The arms race must be stopped and nuclear war must be prevented.

It is almost forty years since the signing of the United Nations Charter. One hundred and fifty-eight nations today solemnly declare their determination to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to unite their strength to maintain international peace and security. We demand that all governments live up to this pledge by demonstrating the political will for disarmament.

We women will continue to support the United Nations' disarmament efforts, and we will take measures at the local, national and international levels to ensure success. Peace is a prerequisite for women; stopping the arms race is a prerequisite to peace. We will continue to work for a world in which children do not have to live in fear and young people can face the future with hope.

On this 8 March, International Women's Day 1985, together with millions of women who rally to protest the arms build-up and military solutions to conflict, we ask each government: Is there any conflict that cannot be solved in a peaceful way? We say emphatically that every conflict can be solved peacefully. There is no alternative if we want to live.

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