

MEDIA RELEASE



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One hundred billion dollars for nuclear weapons: one billion people in extreme poverty.

For immediate release

GENEVA— Nine states spend over US\$100 billion per year on their nuclear weapons, while projections indicate that by 2015 about one billion people will be living on an income of less than US\$1.25 per day, the World Bank's measure of extreme poverty. The use of those weapons would wreak havoc to the global economy, undermine sustainable development, and increase existing inequalities.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) argues that even the possession and maintenance of nuclear weapons has humanitarian consequences. "Every dollar spent on nuclear weapons is a diversion of public resources away from health care, education, and poverty alleviation," said Geneva-based ICAN campaigner Arielle Denis.

China, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, France, India, Israel, Pakistan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, and United States collectively possess approximately 17,300 nuclear weapons. These states are projected by Global Zero to invest more than US\$1 trillion over the next decade to modernize and maintain their nuclear arsenals.

Furthermore, any use of nuclear weapons would have devastating humanitarian impacts. "Aside from the sheer cost of developing and maintaining nuclear weapons, their use would gravely affect development, poverty, hunger, and equality," said Ray Acheson, member of the ICAN International Steering Group. Her chapter in the recently published study *Unspeakable Suffering: The Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons* finds that a nuclear weapon detonation would damage and destroy lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure; result in forced or voluntary migration; interrupt the supply of food and petroleum within the country where the nuclear explosion has occurred; disrupt the global supply of goods, impacting the local economy, the business sector, and the stock market; and more. These catastrophic consequences have been strongly highlighted during the Oslo Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in March 2013, where 130 countries have chosen to confront the horror of these weapons and have realised that they can and must take responsibility for preventing such catastrophe.

The use of a nuclear weapon would likely result in a global economic recession, which would undermine the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and other anti-poverty strategies. During recessions, direct development aid is reduced due to perceived budget constraints in developed countries, while the recession also slows or ends economic growth in developing countries.

"The development, modernization, and maintenance of nuclear weapons, and the risk of a nuclear explosion or nuclear war, takes place in a context that is already challenging for meeting the MDGs and that is rife with international and domestic inequalities," said Ms. Acheson.

As part of the Global Day of Action on Military Spending, ICAN urges governments and civil society to take action to support a ban on nuclear weapons. "As nuclear weapons start to lose their status and role,

people are more and more questioning their outrageous costs. A new momentum is growing for non-nuclear-armed states to challenge the world's nuclear addiction and demand negotiations for a ban on nuclear weapons," said Ms. Denis.

About ICAN

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global campaign coalition working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to initiate negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. It has 300 partner organizations in 70 countries, and was launched in 2007. Prominent supporters include Desmond Tutu, Yoko Ono and the Dalai Lama.

Details available at: <http://www.icanw.org>

Resources

Unspeakable Suffering (2013)

Download at: <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/>

Banning Nuclear Weapons (2013)

Download at: <http://www.article36.org/cat2-nuclear-weapons/banning-nuclear-weapons-2/>

- Catastrophic Humanitarian Harm (2012)

Download at: <http://www.icanw.org/resources/publications>

Interviews

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