**Stonyhurst MUN**

**Political Committee**

**Topic 1: The issue of the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

1. **Background**

Nuclear weapons are the most dangerous weapons on earth.  One can destroy a whole city, potentially killing millions, and jeopardizing the natural environment and lives of future generations through its long-term catastrophic effects.  The dangers from such weapons arise from their very existence.  Although nuclear weapons have only been used twice in warfare—in the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945—about 13,400 reportedly remain in our world today and there have been over 2,000 nuclear tests conducted to date.  Disarmament is the best protection against such dangers, but achieving this goal has been a tremendously difficult challenge.

The United Nations has sought to eliminate such weapons ever since its establishment. The [first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/1(I)) in 1946 established a Commission to deal with problems related to the discovery of atomic energy among others. The Commission was to make proposals for, inter alia, the control of atomic energy to the extent necessary to ensure its use only for peaceful purposes. The resolution also decided that the Commission should make proposals for “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”

The United Nations Secretariat supports efforts aimed at the non-proliferation and total elimination of nuclear weapons. “Security Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament” considers nuclear weapons in the framework of “disarmament to save humanity.”

In the agenda, the Secretary-General calls for resuming dialogue and negotiations for nuclear arms control and disarmament. He also supports extending the norms against nuclear weapons, and in that regard appeals to States that possess nuclear weapons to affirm that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Finally, the agenda proposes preparing for a world free of nuclear weapons through a number of risk -reduction measures, including transparency in nuclear-weapon programmes, further reductions in all types of nuclear weapons, commitments not to introduce new and destabilizing types of nuclear weapons, including cruise missiles, reciprocal commitments for the non-use of nuclear weapons and reduction of the role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines.

**II. Instruments**

A number of multilateral treaties have since been established with the aim of preventing nuclear proliferation and testing, while promoting progress in nuclear disarmament. These include:

1. Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) (1970): a landmark international treaty aimed at preventing the spread of nuclear weapons and promoting disarmament. The treaty is based on three main pillars: (1) preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons, (2) achieving disarmament, and (3) promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Breaches of the NPT:

* North Korea was a party of the NPT as a Non-Nuclear-Weapon State, but later withdrew and pursued nuclear weapons, which is considered a breach of its earlier commitments.
* Countries like India, Pakistan and Israel are parties not part in the NPT. India and Pakistan have openly testes and declared their possession of nuclear weapons
1. Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) (2017): a significant effort to ban nuclear weapons completely, it was adopted by a majority of UN member States although has not been universally accepted and none of the nuclear-armed States have signed or ratified it.
2. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT): aims to ban all nuclear explosions for both civilian and military purposes. While the treaty has been signed by many countries, it has not yet entered into force due to the required ratification by specific nuclear-armed States.
3. Partial Test Ban Treaty (PTBT): a Treaty banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the atmosphere, in outer space and under water
4. New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (new START) between the United States and Russia, which limits their deployed strategic nuclear weapons, was extended in 2021, a positive step in nuclear disarmament efforts.
5. In addition, bilateral and plurilateral treaties and arrangements seek to reduce or eliminate certain categories of nuclear weapons, to prevent the proliferation of such weapons and their delivery vehicles.  These range from several treaties between the United States of America and Russian Federation as well as various other initiatives, to the [Nuclear Suppliers Group](http://www.nuclearsuppliersgroup.org/), the[Missile Technology Control Regime](http://mtcr.info/), the [Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2004/gadis3286.doc.htm), and the [Wassenaar Arrangement](http://www.wassenaar.org/).
6. The Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs): establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones around the world where the development, possession or use of nuclear weapons is prohibited. Examples include:
* Treaty of Tlatelolco (Latin America and the Caribbean) (1967), formally known as the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean, All the countries of the region are parties to the treaty, effectively implemented.
* Treaty of Rarotonga (South Pacific) (1985): it prohibits the testing, use and possession of nuclear weapons. Pacific island nations, including Australia and New Zealand are parties to this treaty.
* Treaty of Bangkok (Southeast Asia) (1995): it covers ten Southeast Asian countries and prohibits the development, testing, use and possession of nuclear weapons.
* Treaty of Pelindaba (Africa) (1996): prohibits nuclear weapons on the continent. Many African countries are party to this treaty.
* Treaty of Semipalatinsk (Central Asia) (2006): it covers Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, effectively prohibiting nuclear weapons in Central Asia.
* Treaty of Antarctica: While not a densely populated region, the treaty system prohibits the testing or use of nuclear weapons in Antarctica for environmental and peacekeeping reasons.
1. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA):
2. Its aim is to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy while preventing the spread of nuclear weapons. It conducts inspections and verification activities to ensure that nuclear materials and facilities are used for peaceful purposes.
3. It implements “Safeguards” agreements with member States that allow it to verify that nuclear materials are not being diverted for military purposes in countries with nuclear programmes. The inspections involve monitoring and inspecting nuclear facilities.
4. It provides guidance and assistance to strengthen countries nuclear safety and security and technical cooperation programmes to help members, particularly developing countries, in the use of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes (agriculture, health, energy, environmental protection).
5. Security Council Resolutions: Related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, they impose sanctions on countries that violate international norms on nuclear weapons. For instance:
* UNSC Resolution 2535 (2020): renewed the mandate of the UN Disarmament Verification Mission in Colombia, involved in verifying the disarmament process in Colombia following the peace agreement
* UNSC Resolution 2441 (2018): extended the mandate of the Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) for the use of chemical weapons in Syria
* UNSC Resolution 3275 (2017): imposing additional sanctions on North Korea in response to its continued nuclear and ballistic missile activities.
1. Conferences and diplomatic efforts
* Review Conferences: periodic review conferences of the NPT to review the implementation and progress of the treaty.
* UN Disarmament Commission (UNDC): annual session to promote disarmament and address disarmament issues including nuclear disarmament
* Conference on Disarmament (CD): negotiating forum established in 1979. While not directly under the UN, it operates with the support of the UN, in Geneva. It has been instrumental in negotiations related to nuclear disarmament.
* UN General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Meetings
* UN First Committee: responsible for addressing disarmament and international security matters within the General Assembly. It convenes annually to consider resolutions and decisions related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
* UN Conference on Disarmament (UNCD): a separate forum established to facilitate multilateral negotiations.
* International conferences on Nuclear Weapons-Free Zones

**Points to consider:**

* **How should countries be sanctioned for breaking some of these laws?**
* **Should nuclear weapons be shared equally between all countries?**
* **Should nuclear weapons be banned completely?**
* **Challenges posed by North Koreas Nuclear Program**