



# A Global Law to Ban Nuclear Weapons:

## *Executive Summary*

### Middle Powers Initiative

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The goal of establishing a world free of nuclear weapons is now widely accepted, due to the leadership of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, President Barack Obama, and other world figures, as well as civil society efforts and the long-standing and persistent demands of middle power governments.

A window of opportunity is open at present, for action to attain this goal, but this may not last. The achievement of nuclear disarmament will require continuing relative cooperation amongst major powers. Progress toward such disarmament will be undermined should there be further proliferation.

Thus, it is urgent to seize the present opportunity, and to begin, soon, collective preparatory work leading to enactment of a universal, verifiable, irreversible and enforceable legal ban on nuclear weapons. Such a ban would put an end to the grim spectacle of some states' reliance on weapons whose use is palpably inhumane and also contrary to law governing the conduct of warfare.

Nuclear disarmament is not the sole property of states holding nuclear weapons; it is a matter of profound concern and interest for the entire world. Further, by pursuing a comprehensive rather than piecemeal solution to the problems posed by the continuing existence of nuclear weapons, efforts to restrain individual attempts to acquire those weapons, would be placed in universal context and thus strengthened.

The Middle Powers Initiative (MPI) accordingly recommends that states initiate implementation of the Secretary-General's proposal for nuclear disarmament by adopting a General Assembly resolution establishing a preparatory process for negotiation of a convention or framework of instruments for the global elimination of nuclear weapons. MPI additionally urges the convening of meetings of interested states, whether possessing nuclear weapons or not, to prepare for such negotiations.

It is also vital to implement all commitments made at the 2010 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference, on peaceful uses, non-proliferation and disarmament. Vigorous implementation of Action 5 of the action plan on disarmament is of particular importance. Key steps include the following:

- meetings among the five NPT nuclear weapon states should address multilateral reduction of the global stockpile of all types of nuclear weapons;
- US nuclear bombs should be withdrawn from Europe and nuclear-sharing arrangements terminated;
- doctrine should move toward a policy of non-use;
- a standard reporting form for nuclear weapon states should be adopted soon in the interest of transparency and accountability.

*The full version of this briefing paper is available on the Middle Powers Initiative website, [www.middlepowers.org](http://www.middlepowers.org).*