



August 10, 2016

The Honorable Stéphane Dion  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Global Affairs Canada  
125 Sussex Drive  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2  
Canada

Email: [stephane.dion@parl.gc.ca](mailto:stephane.dion@parl.gc.ca)

**Re: Nuclear Disarmament and the Open-Ended Working Group**

Dear Minister Dion,

Greetings to you from the Canadian Council of Churches.

The Canadian Council of Churches has taken a decades long interest in Canada's role in working for nuclear disarmament. The President and the leaders of all our member denominations sent a detailed letter to the Prime Minister in 2010<sup>1</sup> where they wrote,

*We believe that to rely on nuclear weapons, to threaten nuclear attack as a foundation for security, is to acquiesce to spiritual and moral bankruptcy. We say without reservation that when measures employed to defend nation states and human institutions undermine God's gift of abundant life, threatening humanity and the planet itself, such measures must be unequivocally rejected.*

Today I am writing to thank you for our government's participation in this year's Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations. The OEWG is mandated to address a global issue of seminal importance. We are grateful that Canada is represented in this relevant and timely initiative.

In the same spirit we would underscore the importance of our government's participation as the OEWG considers and adopts its report to the UN General Assembly.

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<sup>1</sup> A World Without Nuclear Weapons: [https://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Church\\_Leaders\\_Letter\\_on\\_Nuclear\\_Disarmament.pdf](https://www.councilofchurches.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Church_Leaders_Letter_on_Nuclear_Disarmament.pdf).

Regarding the OEWG we look for a final report which will:

1. Clearly reflect the strong support at the OEWG for the negotiation of a new legal instrument to ban nuclear weapons;
2. Duly note the urgency of starting such negotiations: during its examination of inter-disciplinary evidence the OEWG noted the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and further raised concerns about the long-standing deadlock in established disarmament forums regarding the long-term modernization programs of states with nuclear weapons;
3. Make detailed mention of the legal provisions necessary for an explicit, comprehensive and binding prohibition of nuclear weapons and of providing assistance or inducements to carry out prohibited actions;
4. Take clear note that the OEWG's modus operandi of being open to all, blockable by none and inclusive of civil society is relevant to the task of taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The unconscionable destruction and deep immorality of nuclear weapons are universally recognized. Genuine security cannot be assured by having them. Yet such widely held convictions have often been marginalized in other disarmament processes. That pattern must be changed.

The OEWG and related initiatives have now identified a pathway which promises to enhance security for all. It is high time to carry that shared resolve forward in good faith with a firm recommendation from the OEWG to begin the negotiation of a nuclear weapons ban.

With best wishes for substantive progress at the Working Group,

Sincerely yours,



The Rev. Dr. Karen Hamilton  
General Secretary

cc: The Rev. Canon Dr. Alyson Barnett-Cowan, President  
Cesar Jaramillo, Executive Director, Project Ploughshares  
Peter Prove, Director, Commission of the Churches on International  
Affairs/World Council of Churches (CCIA/WCC)  
Jonathan Frerichs, Humanitarian Disarmament Consultant, CCIA/WCC

Hon. Tony Clement, Foreign Affairs Critic, Conservative Party of Canada  
MP H  l  ne Laverdi  re, Foreign Affairs Critic, New Democratic Party of Canada  
MP Luc Th  riault, Foreign Affairs Critic, Bloc Qu  b  cois  
MP Elizabeth May, Green Party of Canada

Rosemary McCarney, Canadian Ambassador and Permanent Representative to  
the United Nations and the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva

*The Canadian Council of Churches is the broadest and most inclusive ecumenical body in the world, now representing 25 denominations of Anglican; Evangelical; Free Church; Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox; Protestant; and Catholic traditions. Together we represent more than 85% of the Christians in Canada. The Canadian Council of Churches was founded in 1944.*