



Ayuba Wabba

President
Président
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Presidente

Sharan Burrow

General Secretary
Secrétaire générale
Generalsekretärin
Secretaria General

Ms Sophie Wilmès
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Kabinet van Sophie Wilmès
Egmont I
Karmelietenstraat 15
1000 Brussel
België

HTUR/JB

16 December 2021

Request to participate in the first meeting of states parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Dear Ms. Wilmès,

On behalf of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), representing 200 million workers in 163 countries, including through the national trade union centres ACV-CSC, ABVV-FGTB and ACLVB-CGSLB in Belgium; as well as the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) we write with respect to the first meeting of states parties (MSP) to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), scheduled to take place in Vienna from 22 to 24 March 2022.

States that have not yet joined the TPNW, including Belgium, are invited to participate in this meeting as observers. According to the draft rules of procedure, observers will have the opportunity to make oral statements, submit written statements, and receive official documents.

We note that several European states including Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Switzerland have recently confirmed that they intend to participate in the Vienna meeting as observers. In addition, Austria, Ireland and Malta have ratified the Treaty and will therefore be attending as states parties. Recently, the German coalition agreement included the intention to observe, and we understand that a number of other NATO members are open to the possibility of participating. None of these states has made a commitment to adhere to the TPNW. However, all view the meeting of states parties as an important forum for discussing the shared goals of advancing nuclear disarmament and strengthening barriers against nuclear proliferation. By participating as an observer in the Vienna meeting, Belgium would show its willingness to maintain an open and constructive dialogue with TPNW states parties.

The TPNW is now a permanent part of the international legal architecture governing nuclear weapons. The number of states adhering to it will continue to increase over time. We believe that it is in Belgium's interests to engage with the treaty and its states parties.

At a minimum, we hope that the Belgian government will commit to participating as an observer in the forthcoming TPNW meeting of states parties, and maintain an open mind to the possibility of joining the treaty in the future.

We would value the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this urgent matter.

Looking forward to your reply,

Mr Marc Leemans

ACV-CSC

Mr Thierry Bodson

ABVV-FGTB

Mr Olivier Valentin

ACLVB-CGSLB

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