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**WOMEN & SUSTAINABLE PEACE: THE HUMAN RIGHT TO PEACE**

**Panel – March 13, 2017**

Distinguished Ambassador Chowdury, Ambassador Masud Bin Momen, Professor Villán Durán, Ms Otani, Ms Herman,

The noblest task of the United Nations is to promote and maintain the peace in the world and to act promptly to prevent local, regional and international conflicts.  We must recognize that Peace is not only an issue of national security and the exclusive domain of the UN Security Council, but most fundamentally a human right with individual and collective dimensions, a matter of concern to each and every one of us, and which should be on the agenda of the General Assembly, the Human Rights Council, and every intergovernmental and non-governmental organization.

Among the conditions for the exercise of the human right to peace are the realization of the right of self-determination of peoples as a crucial conflict-prevention strategy, respect for the principle of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other States, the end to exploitation and economic neo-colonialism, the domestic implementation of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, and the prohibition of propaganda for war, as stipulated in article 20(1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights .

Civil society will not cease to demand the codification of the human right to peace in a holistic declaration that encompasses not only disarmament and conscientious objection to military service, but also issues of structural violence, gender equality, freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly and association, and the need to correct imbalances that lead to conflict, mass migration and refugee flows.  The Declaracion de Luarca of 2006 and the Declaracion de Santiago of 2010 continue to give us courage and inspiration to achieve more than already proclaimed in General Assembly Resolution 39/11 of 1984, in the UNESCO Declaration on a Culture of Peace of 1998 (GA Resolution 53/243A), or the rather bland GA Resolution 71/189 adopted on 19 December 2016.  We ought to go back to the 2014 text of the Advisory Committee to the Human Rights Council and continue demanding that the Council and the General Assembly listen to the call of civil society.

As I elucidated in my 2013 report to the UN General Assembly (A/68/284 paras 6-14), the legal basis of the human right to peace is found in the UN Charter and in provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.  These are hard-law provisions that are justiciable under the Optional Protocols to ICCPR and ICESCR.

Our efforts must be directed toward achieving complete nuclear disarmament, since the destiny of the planet depends on preventing a nuclear catastrophe, which may be unleashed not only through deliberate aggression, but through error, misunderstanding or a computer glitch. Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty requires the nuclear states to negotiate in good faith to achieve nuclear disarmament, which entails the destruction of the huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Research and development into nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction must be prohibited. The United Nations Human Rights Committee has devoted two general comments to the right to life (article 6 ICCPR) and condemned the continued production and stockpiling of nuclear weapons.  It is high time for the UN Conference on Disarmament to take its responsibilities more seriously and to come to an agreement.

We salute the declaration of more and more regions of the world as nuclear-weapon-free zones, including Antarctica, Space, the Seabed, the South Pacific, Central Asia and Africa.  This year we commemorate fifty years since the signing of the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1967, pursuant to which Latin America and the Caribbean became a nuclear-weapon free zone comprising 33 countries and more than 21 million square kilometres.  We also welcome the 2014 CELAC declaration of Latin America and the Caribbean as a “zone of peace”, a key step to countering the globalization of militarism.

Let us persevere so that the entire universe is recognized as a zone of peace and human rights.  The resources that are today being wasted on war and war-like activities must be redirected to achieve the sustainable development goals and to address the manifold challenges posed by climate change.

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