

Minister
of Foreign Affairs



Ministre
des Affaires étrangères

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0G2

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Dear Doctor Wagner:

Thank you for your correspondence of July 16, 2020, asking for the position of the Government of Canada on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. I also appreciate your sharing Ms. Setsuko Thurlow's letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

For more than 50 years, Canada has actively pursued a pragmatic step-by-step approach toward nuclear disarmament that seeks to halt the spread of nuclear weapons, reduce existing stockpiles, and irreversibly eliminate them. Canada's nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policy is anchored in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Since its entry into force, Canada's commitment to the NPT has been unwavering.

To that end, Canada continues to believe that nuclear disarmament can most effectively be advanced through a pragmatic, inclusive and progressive approach. In support of the NPT process, Canada is working within several international coalitions to advance concrete progress on disarmament. For example, through the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, Canada contributes actively to efforts related to transparency on implementation of NPT obligations, strengthening the NPT review process, de-alerting, and disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Canada is also engaged in the ministerial-level Stockholm Initiative on Nuclear Disarmament, which issued, on February 25, 2020, the Berlin Declaration and a list of "stepping stones"—short-term, achievable and meaningful actions—to advance nuclear disarmament. Among these was a call on the United States and Russia to extend New START and to engage in talks on its possible expansion. Canada has joined partners in diplomatic efforts to encourage other states to support this initiative. Despite COVID-19, this work continues apace virtually. Most recently, Parliamentary Secretary Robert Oliphant participated in the Stockholm Initiative's third ministerial meeting on June 9, 2020, and joined partners on July 9, 2020, in a ministerial exchange of views in support of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and the global moratorium on nuclear testing.

Canada 

In addition to these efforts, Canada is focussing its efforts in a range of non-proliferation and disarmament priority areas. These include championing or supporting several actions set out in the United Nations Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, such as advancing negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, supporting efforts on nuclear disarmament verification, and championing gender equality and women's leadership in peace and security. Canada also continues to use cross-regional forums at all levels to advance progress on disarmament, such as through the United States-led Creating the Environment for Nuclear Disarmament initiative, which seeks to address factors in the international security environment that inhibit progress on disarmament.

The 75th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will serve as a stark reminder of the importance of eliminating nuclear weapons from the planet. Canada remains committed to constructively advancing the nuclear disarmament process and salutes the tireless efforts of activists — including Setsuko Thurlow — for their work in drawing attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons.

Thank you for taking the time to write.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'F. Champagne', with a stylized flourish at the end.

The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne, P.C., M.P.