



Nuclear weapons and its effect on climate and the environment

During the Stockholm Conference in 1972 nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons test were discussed in-depth, which resulted in principle 26 in the conference declaration as well as a resolution condemning nuclear tests.

Principle 26: “Man and his environment must be spared the effects of nuclear weapons and all other means of mass destruction. States must strive to reach prompt agreement, in the relevant international organs, on the elimination and complete destruction of such weapons.”

Generations of climate scientists have documented that a nuclear war could cause drastic climatic disturbances and global famine. Last year scientists found that the use of a few hundred weapons (less than 10% of today’s global nuclear arsenals) could nearly stop all rain over India and central China, and reduce global precipitation globally by 15%-30%. It would take over a decade to return to rainfall levels before the nuclear war.

Nuclear weapons destroy the climate even when they are not used. Nuclear weapons facilities – just like how the oil and gas companies exacerbating the climate crisis – have contaminated land and water with radioactive waste lasting at least 100,000 years. Efforts to clean up the sites have cost billions of dollars over decades - and are still largely unfinished.

The unacceptable humanitarian and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons and the ever-growing risk of nuclear use led 122 countries to vote to ban them in 2017. The treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons (TPNW) is the first ever nuclear weapons legal framework that handles the environmental risk of nuclear weapons.

At the Stockholm+50 the issue of nuclear weapons and the effects on climate and the environment contribution to both *Leadership dialogue 1* by reflecting on the urgent need for action on nuclear disarmament from an environmental and climate perspective and moving from incremental change to systematic change. As well *addressing Leadership dialogue 3*, on how to accelerate the implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development, by discussing nuclear weapons effects on SDG 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promoting well-being for all at all ages”, Goal 6 “Ensure access to water and sanitation for all”, Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources” and Goal 15 “Sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, halt biodiversity loss”.

We therefore call on government to:

- address nuclear weapons and its effect on climate and the environment during the Stockholm+50 as a follow-up to recommendation 26 from the 1972 conference and take stock on the development since, both scientifically, legal and on a policy’s levels.
- agree on further measures to contribute to accelerating a transformation that leads to nuclear disarmament and a healthy planet for all, where no one is left behind."