

Ambassador Yel'chenko, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentleman,

I thank you and the NGO community for inviting us to speak at this conference, one that is of crucial importance for the survival of future generations.

Today, I speak for those who have to bear the consequences of decisions governments are making— decisions based on current power relationships but which will have an impact far into the future. I speak for the innocent youth of the world who might not have the same expertise as you on nuclear weapons, but who are committed to playing a responsible role in this world and who have the right to demand a safe life free from constant nuclear threat.

And we, the youth present at this meeting, are representing those young people who want to make their voices heard. All over the world the youth take all kinds of actions to show their clear and determined opposition to the continuation, renewal and modernisation of nuclear arsenals:

This is the fourth time we have spoken at an NPT conference.

In Germany, many young people have called for an end of the nuclear sharing and a withdrawal of the nuclear weapons based in their country.

In Faslane, Scotland, hundreds of youth blockaded the British nuclear base to demonstrate against the renewal of British nuclear weapons.

In California, US students carry out hunger strikes against nuclear research.

These youth are well informed, far sighted and determined to make a difference.

Despite their commitment and integrity, they are not taken seriously enough by decision-makers. It is important to integrate the younger generation into the decision making process. Yet the official guidelines of this conference still exclude people under eighteen from participating as NGO representatives. The right to live – the right to be engaged in one's future – does not start at 18 years.

Thus, young people should be heard and their demand for a nuclear-free world should not be ignored.

Young people do not believe that nuclear weapons ensure peace. Nuclear weapons kill and harm not only when they are used, but by their mere existence.

Can this be justified?

Can a government answer for the consequences of Uranium mining, the health problems, poverty and civil wars ruining the lives of defenceless indigenous people?

Can governments answer for why they spend millions of dollars on nuclear weapons instead of standing together to save millions of people from starving in poverty?

Can a government answer for the damage to the environment by the consumption of natural resources used in production of these needless weapons, the thoughtless dealing with fissile material and the health and environmental consequences of nuclear tests – which are still not conclusively prohibited.

Can a government answer for the policy of nuclear deterrence - the threat to murder millions of children, women and men - people as innocent as their and your own children and family members - just to secure national interests?

No. These questions cannot be answered for.

Exposing the human race to the danger of its complete annihilation is not justified or justifiable.

We as youth are convinced that only the complete abolition of nuclear weapons can secure our survival and generate a world based on peace and cooperation rather than conflict and terrorism. The already existing proposal for a Nuclear Weapons Convention is

the right way towards this goal. The youth present at this meeting will give an example for negotiations towards this Nuclear Weapons Convention in a simulation game on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May.

We believe that a Nuclear Weapons Convention is possible.

It is also increasingly demanded by international law:

Article VI of the NPT and the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice from 1996

contain a clear obligation to achieve comprehensive nuclear disarmament.

For me it is unbelievable that today, in our reality where most people from all over the world are living, loving and working together in the same places, regardless of their races and religions, the representatives of these people and their countries are still unable to see what is clear in every child's eye: regardless of the country in which they are born, people are in the same way men, women, mothers, fathers, grandpas and grandmas as you are or will you be.

All of them, all of us, all of you have the right to live without fear - in a world free of nuclear weapons.

We must use the memory of the victims and survivors of nuclear weapons to inspire us to achieve this goal. Remember the horrible pictures of hundreds and thousands of innocent human beings burned by the apocalyptic fire of the two bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Only two bombs. Small in relation to the thousands of weapons which are ready to use at this very moment.

Seeing this picture in front of my eyes, I, in the name of all future generations, call upon you as representatives of your states: move your mind, move your heart! Move forward to reach a safe and nuclear free world!

If you say this is impossible: please imagine the face of your true love, of your children, of children from all over the world and think twice if you are still willing to repeat your answer.

Please move your hearts and act!

Thank you.