

Forum I: Dialogue between Governments and Civil Society,
August 4, 2025

Remarks from Cuban Ambassador Gisela García

I would like to begin my remarks by highlighting the significance of being here today, on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the United States' atomic bombing of this city. The use of nuclear weapons against Hiroshima and Nagasaki not only caused the instant death of hundreds of thousands of people, but also left a lasting legacy of suffering: radiation sickness, collective trauma, and the violation of the fundamental right to life.

I am grateful for the invitation to this panel, which provides an opportunity to reflect, with historical rigor and ethical commitment, on one of the darkest episodes in human history, and especially on how to prevent it from happening again. The main lesson that this horrific event leaves us today is clear and urgent: nuclear weapons are incompatible with human security, lasting peace, and the survival of our species. Their mere existence constitutes a permanent threat to life on the planet and is contrary to the most basic principles of international humanitarian law. General and complete disarmament, in particular the prohibition and elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, is one of Cuba's highest priorities.

Cuba's position in favor of nuclear disarmament is a principle of our foreign policy, enshrined in our Constitution. Cuba has maintained a clear and consistent position in defense of the total, verifiable, transparent, and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons.

We attach great importance to nuclear disarmament, and Cuba maintains that the only guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their prohibition and total elimination.

The imminent danger of repeating the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will remain latent as long as the more than 12,000 nuclear weapons that still exist in the world are not eliminated in a transparent, complete, irreversible, and verifiable manner, as I said earlier. We are convinced that as long as nuclear weapons exist, the risk of their proliferation and possible use will also persist.

We are meeting here today in an increasingly alarming international context. Warmongering rhetoric is resurgent, military bases and facilities are expanding globally, substantial resources continue to be allocated to the modernization and upgrading of nuclear arsenals, and new weapons systems are being developed, while multilateral control frameworks are being weakened. Nuclear deterrence continues to be an essential part of the military defense and security doctrines of some States.

Multilateralism and international law are the primary mechanisms for preventing the use of nuclear weapons.

Cuba believes that a legally binding international instrument is needed to compel nuclear-weapon States to commit unconditionally to not use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

The support of as many countries as possible is needed for all existing multilateral regimes prohibiting weapons of mass destruction.

We also attach great importance to the need to universalize the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which bans these weapons and all types of nuclear testing under all circumstances.

Cuba was the fifth country to ratify this instrument, on January 30th, 2018, demonstrating its commitment to general and complete disarmament. We will continue to support efforts aimed at universalizing this instrument, convinced that each new State that joins represents a new step forward towards the abolition of nuclear weapons.

“Comandante en Jefe” Fidel Castro said in 1979, in the midst of the Cold War, that “The noise of weapons, of threatening language, of arrogance on the international scene must cease. Enough of the illusion that the world's problems can be solved with nuclear weapons. Bombs can kill the hungry, the sick, the ignorant, but they cannot kill hunger, disease, or ignorance.”

This idea is fundamental. As long as there remains a group of countries that impose their values, regimes, and interests on the rest by force, there can be no peaceful coexistence. As long as ethnic, political, and religious differences and the predatory interests of capital continue to motivate interventions in sovereign states, nuclear weapons will continue to be the resource of a few, whether for intimidation or as a supposed means of defense.

True nuclear disarmament must be accompanied by greater investment in sustainable development, in fighting climate change, in a fairer distribution of our wealth and, above all, in respect for the self-determination of peoples and the sovereign equality of States.

However utopian this path may seem, there are concrete steps that can be taken. Latin America and the Caribbean are an example to

the world in this regard. We were the first densely populated region in the world to be declared a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, through the Treaty of Tlatelolco, and today we are the region with the largest number of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The 33 countries of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), in proclaiming the region a Zone of Peace in 2014, reaffirmed the promotion of nuclear disarmament as a main objective.

This demonstrates that political will is fundamental to peace, but it must also be accompanied by grassroots activism. We cannot stop talking about nuclear weapons and their devastating consequences for humanity. Educating new generations, who did not live through these horrors, must be a priority and a conscious task for all of us.

Conclusions

Thank you again for inviting me to participate in this panel, alongside such distinguished guests and experts on the subject.

I would like my closing remarks to serve as a reminder of our responsibility as a civilization to avoid historical amnesia.

Nuclear weapons have never ceased to be a weapon of war for the powerful, even if they are justified by the fallacy of deterrence or the taboo of avoiding first use. Their mere existence, as I said, is proof of their potential use, especially in the divisive, unequal, and increasingly belligerent world in which we find ourselves today.

I hope that this meeting, and everything we continue to do, will strengthen the alliances between academics, social movements,

and governments to demand and achieve the total and irreversible elimination of nuclear arsenals, as well as the reorientation of military resources towards human development and climate justice.

We must continue to honor the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, transforming horror into hope through the unity of our peoples. It is urgent that we move from words to deeds to realize the dream of a world free of nuclear weapons.