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(Transcribed from oral presentation)

Thank you for the invitation and thank you for giving me the floor. And you know after the two distinguished speakers before me, I will not speak about the danger of the world and the challenges we are facing. I really would like to discuss a little bit along our topic, "Dialogue Between Government and the Civil Society", because for me, this is a very important theoretical, scientifically and practical point of our discussions.

Let me first come back, what is the theoretical background? For me it is that politics means to be active for interests. And these interests are the background of the actions of the peace movements and the actions of governments. And when there is an overlap of the interest in actions and the interest of political positions, then a dialogue is possible. And when there is an overlap, political suggestions, political agreements between governments and civil society, in our case, above all, peace movements, then I think a dialogue is possible. I will say, vice versa, I have no idea which dialogue I should make with Trump, because there is no background for a common negotiation, discussion, with such a people who are preparing armament race, who are against colored-people, who is violating, and so on.

So dialog, the background of dialogue is the common interest in political, social, peaceful developments, and this brings me to the question—is there an overlap of interests when discussing nuclear weapons between governments and civil society? And I also have to say, not with all governments at the same point. And I'm looking to the U.S. government, but even to the Russian or Chinese government. I cannot see any overlap in their interest in nuclear disarmament and the abolition of nuclear weapons. They want to keep their weapons. And the reason is very easy. For them, nuclear weapons are a part of their power structure and power influence in the world, and they don't want to give this up.

But there are a lot of countries which are in favor of nuclear disarmament for many reasons. They see the problems, they see the risks of nuclear armament. They see the consequences -- the humanitarian and international law consequences. But they also see the basic inequality in the world that some countries have nuclear weapons, and others don't have nuclear weapons. This inequality, which is a part of the NPT treaty, is for me a part of the colonial system, not of the democratic system of the 21st century. So we also have to overcome this.

So there is interest from many countries and civil society, peace movements in reducing and the disarmament process, and even the process of abolishing nuclear weapons. And this is the background for the dialogue. This happened mainly at first in the United Nations, but also—and this can be the best example for this international dialogue—in the preparation of the ban treaty. Because this preparation was a common preparation for governments, and the Austrian ambassador was describing it in the best way; "I can also do it and ICAN and other peace movements." They were finding common ways on how to mobilize a lot of governments and how to mobilize local peace movements and peace activists for a common strategic goal. And they were discussing it together, they were developing it, they held several conferences from Vienna to Mexico, and then they had this—I never have seen this—this highly interesting negotiation, the kind of negotiation here in the United Nations. The chair of the UN

Committee, the Costa Rican ambassador, after the first day changed totally the agenda. There was not again, all the speeches of the different governments. No, there was a panel. And in the panel in the afternoon there sat three governments and three people from the civil society. And then there was a public debate. And in the line by the microphone were standing people from the civil society and the ambassadors. And at the end, they were starting, discussing, negotiating and find the differences we have and find compromises which brought us together at the end, and we were drinking champagne together, celebrating the 121 countries for supporting this treaty.

This is the dialogue we could see, when there is an overlap of interests in common positions. And I think this is also the background now that we are in, in the phase of getting the ban treaty ratified by many countries. You know the Austrian government and other governments are discussing with their partner governments. Civil society, peace movements have a strategic plan how to get more countries to ratify this treaty. And you know, it is not easy because—the ambassador was saying it in a very friendly manner, I can say it a little bit clearer—because there is huge opposition and pressure from the United States and the other NATO countries and the other nuclear weapons countries. And this pressure is not only words. We know that the governmental people from the NATO countries were going to African and Asian countries saying when you ratify, we will shorten the money we have given to you. This is the reality, and he's a diplomat, I'm a civil society activist, so I can say much clearer. This is the role of civil society. To say some things clearer. So this shows we are working together, making the ban treaty a reality. And I think this is a new kind of dialogue, which will treat NGOs as civil societies and the best example up to now, for me, is the ban treaty.

And let me say this for the future, because we are thinking of the future, and thanks to Joseph for introducing 2020. You know, I'm very concerned about the result of the 2020 conference. But maybe the 2020 Review Conference could develop a new coalition of countries for the willingness for further nuclear disarmament processes and develop a coalition of the willingness between the governments—and I now want to include one big other important societal effort—parliamentarians and civil society. At the start point for a new worldwide coalition of actions, for overcoming this horrible situation that we are coming nearer and nearer to big international war including nuclear weapons destroying the whole planet. I think this is the challenge, and I think our conference could be a part of this process bringing these different forces together for a new coalition. The world needs such a coalition. Otherwise we will be in more danger than we are now.

Let me finish with a question—what is the role of the peace movements in this time? First of all, we have to be very open. We have to be very open in the discussions with the governments. We know that we have very often a lot of controversies by the internal politics with these governments. We know also the Austrian government is not the most social government in the world. There are a lot of opposition positions from my point of view. But we have many common points and peace movements you should search for these common points and look into bringing them forward. Then we criticize, but then looking for and searching for common points.

The second point, I think is we need a very clear voice. We have to say very clearly who's in favor of such a disarmament process and who are the opponents. And they are very clear to say that there are countries that have doctrines of deterrence and even include the first use of nuclear weapons. And these are mainly the NATO countries and others. So we have to speak with a very clear voice to educate the people, to make clear why we are doing this tremendously important work.

Third, I think we need a much stronger and more attractive peace movement. You must be an attractive coalition partner. Otherwise we are not attractive for the governments. You know when people are standing at the corner every two years, that is not an attractive peace movement. Attractive peace movements are peace movements which are mobilizing people. And you all know that you have a lot of homework to do, maybe with the exclusion of Japan. But in many of the other countries we have to do much more for that. So we need to raise the attractiveness of the peace movements, also in the preparation of 2020. In this case for me, 2020 is the start point for developing another background of the new possibilities, a new worldwide coalition of very different partners which include civil society and governments for a world without nuclear weapons. And I hope at the end, with this coalition, we will be successful. Thank you.