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**MEDIA ADVISORY**

**For immediate release**

13 February 2014

Nuevo Vallarta, Nayarit, Mexico—The Second International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, which opens today, should be a turning point in the global effort to ban and eliminate the most destructive weapons ever created.

“Building on the facts laid out in Oslo last year, this meeting will demonstrate indisputably that any use of nuclear weapons would overwhelm our capacity to respond and recover. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the possibility of intentional or accidental detonations poses real and unacceptable risks to humanity.” said Dr. Tilman Ruff, Co-chair of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a network of 359 NGOs from 92 countries.

The Mexico conference is the latest step in a process that has changed the way nuclear weapons are discussed at the international level. Since 2010, when states parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty recognized “the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons,” a new narrative has emerged in which the actual effects of these weapons are the basis for renewed actions to address them. The Red Cross movement, United Nations relief agencies, civil society and the majority of the world’s nations have endorsed this humanitarian initiative. In October 125 states joined a statement by New Zealand at the United Nations noting that “the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must underpin all approaches and efforts towards nuclear disarmament.”

ICAN representative Beatrice Fihn said: “The evidence to be discussed here clearly shows that nuclear weapons threaten the security and survival of everyone. This meeting should be the point of no return. Governments must now take the next step and decide what to do to address these consequences. They cannot listen to the evidence and not act. The next step should be negotiations on a treaty banning nuclear weapons, even if the nuclear-armed states don’t want it. These are the only weapons of mass destruction not yet banned and the question is: should they be legal or illegal?” Ms. Fihn edited a report on nuclear weapons impacts titled “Unspeakable Suffering”, published by the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) and ICAN.

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Among civil society representatives addressing the Conference in Mexico are several atomic bomb survivors from Hiroshima and Nagasaki (“Hibakusha”). US climate scientist Professor Alan Robock, physician Dr. Ira Helfand, and Richard Moyes of Article 36 will present recent research on the effects of nuclear detonations on the planet’s climate, agriculture, human health and social and economic infrastructure. Renowned author of “Command and Control” Eric Schlosser, former US military officer Bruce Blair, and Chatham House Research Director Dr. Patricia Lewis will address nuclear weapons risks, miscalculations and accidents.

**Interviews**

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**About ICAN**

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) is a global campaign coalition working to mobilize people in all countries to inspire, persuade and pressure their governments to initiate negotiations for a treaty banning nuclear weapons. It has 359 partner organizations in 92 countries, and was launched in 2007.

Details available at:

http://www.icanw.org

[**Unspeakable Suffering**](http://www.icanw.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Unspeakable.pdf)

[**Two Billion People At Risk**](http://www.psr.org/assets/pdfs/two-billion-at-risk.pdf)