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Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have heard today highly informative presentations and discussions. Now is the time to reflect on some key points. All of us will draw our own conclusions. Let me present what Austria takes away from today in this:

Chair's Summary (which is presented in a purely national capacity)

The Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons addressed the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, including effects on human health, the environment, agriculture and food security, migration and the economy, as well as the risks and likelihood of authorized, unauthorized or accidental detonations of nuclear weapons, international response capabilities and the applicable normative framework and identified areas where further research and investigation appears necessary.

More than 800 delegates representing 80 States, the United Nations, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and other relevant international organisations, civil society organisations and academia participated in the Conference.

The following key points can be summarised from the presentations and discussions:

- It is impossible to appropriately address the immediate humanitarian emergency and long-term consequences of nuclear weapon detonations. What we cannot prepare for, what we cannot respond to, we must therefore prevent.
- Nuclear winter would likely affect the entire globe even after a limited regional nuclear exchange and result in dramatic temperature drops and blocked out sunlight for years leading to food shortages and deadly starvation in many parts of the world.
- As we progress in researching the impact of nuclear weapons, we learn that nuclear weapons detonations have vaster, truly global and longer persisting consequences than we thought before.

- Atmospheric nuclear tests, although conducted decades ago, are responsible for serious health effects and long lasting environmental degradation. New analysis and techniques allow improved mapping of global radioactive contamination, exposed communities, and impacted ecosystems due to fallout from nuclear weapon testing with important implications for affected communities.
- We still lack an integrated full picture of the impact of nuclear weapons. More interdisciplinary work and further research on the interplay between short-, mid- and long-term effects are required for deepening our knowledge. Not only more research, but also more discussion and consideration is necessary in order to bring more clarity and findings on which a fact-based policy can be developed.
- The risks of accidental, mistaken, unauthorized or intentional detonations of nuclear weapons have reached an unprecedented high level for political, strategic and technological reasons.
- The propagation of smaller tactical, better usable nuclear weapons is disconcerting. Even the detonation of a single so-called small nuclear weapon would have devastating and compounding effects and, in addition, carry a very high risk of triggering an escalation to a limited or all-out nuclear war.
- The threat of nuclear weapons use declared by leading Russian politicians showcases how real this risk is today and underscores the fragility of a security paradigm based on the theory of nuclear deterrence. Russia's invasion of Ukraine underscores the fact that nuclear weapons do not prevent major wars, but rather embolden nuclear-armed states to start wars.
- War between nuclear armed states is not only possible, but has already repeatedly happened, e.g. on the Indian Subcontinent. We know that nuclear conflict is not an abstract danger, but a very real one. In light of regional and global tensions, several plausible scenarios exist today in different parts of the world for nuclear conflict.
- In today's world where there is no common understanding of essential rules, norms and standards any longer, nuclear weapons further increase uncertainty and insecurity.
- Substantial and not only declaratory risk reduction measures are certainly called for in the short term, but only the elimination of nuclear weapons offers effective prevention.
- A broader focus on risk reduction is needed in light of what we do know and what we do not know. It is difficult to fully understand their sources, and even more so to factor in future risks arising from technological and doctrinal change, as there exist "known-unknowns", but also "unknown-unknowns".

- The theory that nuclear deterrence can prevent a nuclear war is further put in doubt by the effects of technological progress and the integration of new technologies into nuclear weapons systems and decision-making structures.
- Building security on nuclear deterrence is not sustainable. When nuclear deterrence fails, it will fail with catastrophic effects. Many see a logical problem, how a weapon that threatens the continued existence of civilization, could serve as the bedrock of security.
- The combined perspective of the humanitarian consequences and the risks of nuclear weapons would allow us to tackle the question of the utility of nuclear weapons and of the veracity of nuclear deterrence theory on a more fact-based basis.
- Only an approach based on scientific results and the involvement of civil society, academia and affected communities, in particular the Hibakusha and the victims of nuclear testing, can render an open, meaningful disarmament debate leading to concrete results. Such an inclusive approach is also needed to deliver a broad range of results, such as on the disproportionate harm of atomic radiation on girls and women.
- Relevant nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation fora therefore need to engage with existing and future research on the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons as it emerges.
- The humanitarian perspective has transformative and unifying potential for the urgently needed reinvigoration of nuclear disarmament.
- Both the findings on humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons underline the need to always put the catastrophic humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons at the centre of our work as long as these weapons exist. Therefore, this issue must underpin all discussions on nuclear weapons issues.

I would like to conclude this summary by thanking all presenters, you the participants and express my hope that all of us can use what we take away from today's conference in our common quest for a nuclear weapon free world.