



**Side Event on the Independent Scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear
War, Hosted by Ireland and New Zealand**

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As delivered



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Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to join you today to discuss the independent Scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear War.

I am particularly pleased to be here at the invitation of Ireland and New Zealand, the two co-sponsors of the General Assembly resolution establishing the Panel. Both Ireland and New Zealand have been tireless advocates for the cause of nuclear disarmament and for deepening our understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. They have been strong supporters – financially and politically – of the work of the Panel.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Nuclear risk has increased over the past decade. Indeed, I believe it is now at its highest level.

This is not only my personal opinion. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists moved the Doomsday Clock to eighty-five seconds to midnight on January 27, 2026, marking the most perilous setting since the Clock's creation in 1947. Not just "since the darkest days of the Cold War", but **ever**. This is a sobering thought.

These renewed prospects of nuclear war bring with them the possibility of catastrophic humanitarian and environmental consequences.

And yet, our understanding of the impacts of nuclear war has not kept up with developments. The most recent United Nations study on this subject was over forty years ago. It does not, for example, take into account the cascading effects of even a limited nuclear war on a globalized and highly interconnected international system and economy.

Clearly, we are long overdue for an updated and comprehensive scientific assessment of nuclear war effects and its consequences, as well as an understanding of where there is agreement among the scientific community, and where more research is needed. It is for this reason that the General Assembly established this Panel: to ensure that the world has access to critical scientifically rigorous and unbiased information.

We are all aware that a nuclear war would have devastating, even existential consequences. The goal of the Panel's work is not to be alarmist or to sensationalize. But the true costs of escalation, of deterrence policies, and of the very possession of nuclear weapons must be clearly, effectively and non-politically communicated to all stakeholders.

First, they must be clear to policymakers, so that their advice can be evidence-based.

Second, they must be clear to decision-makers, so that they take decisions with full understanding of the existential risks and consequences,

Third, and perhaps most importantly – they must be communicated to the public in the service of democratic accountability and in the spirit of principled transparency.

As has been reaffirmed in the past by the nuclear-weapon States: a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought.

But it is not enough to repeat that statement. We must explain **why** it cannot be won and why, therefore, fighting a nuclear war would be an exercise in futility and self-destruction.

The independent scientific Panel on the Effects of Nuclear War contains a diverse array of expertise. Some members were nominated by their governments. Others were appointed to the Panel through self-nominations or nominations by academic or scientific institutions. They come from all corners of the world and are united by their breadth of knowledge in their diverse fields and by the seriousness and commitment with which they approach their work.

This dedication and scientific capability will allow the Panel to contribute to an important and timely view of the environmental, economic, social, public health, and humanitarian consequences of nuclear war.

You will hear today from the Chair of the Panel, Dr. Ana María Cetto, as well as its Vice-Chair, Sir Andrew Haines, and its Scientific Secretary, Professor Sébastien Philippe. They, along with their fellow panelists, have been steering the work of the Panel's twenty members since they first met, here in New York, this past September.

You will also hear from Dr. Masao Tomonaga, who as a Member of the Panel not only brings his globally-renowned scientific expertise on the medical consequences of the atomic bombs, but his own lived experience of the devastation of nuclear war as a *hibakusha*.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We cannot solve a problem we do not fully understand. The Panel's work in helping the people of the world understand the effects – and true costs – of nuclear war will be a crucial part of our efforts to prevent it.

The United Nations will continue its support for the work of the Panel, and – along with the rest of the international community – looks forward to its final report next year.

I thank you very much for your attention.
