1. **What is your valuation of the current level of risk?**

WILPF UK Section endorses the views of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists as very grave, and is deeply concerned by the UNIDIR’s report to the TPNW negotiating conference that highlights the disproportionate impact of ionizing radiation on women and girls, and endorses our own WILPF International programme, Reaching Critical Will, in its work on how nuclear discourse is mired in highly gendered analysis of security and does not address the threats that nuclear weapons present.

2. **Ahead of the 2020 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), what are the biggest challenges facing global nuclear diplomacy?**

WILPF accepts the findings by Reaching Critical Will that lack of action by nuclear armed states in fulfilling their NPT obligations and lack of willingness to work with non nuclear-armed or allied member states presents a dangerous challenge to diplomacy. The evidence-led findings of scientists and the real concerns of civil society NGO’s with expertise must be included in the negotiating chamber and this must mean the inclusion of women, and evidence of the lived experience of all women who have been adversely affected by nuclear policies to date. Additionally, there is an increasing risk of diplomatic efforts being undermined by the actions of non state actors, the increased risk of cyberattack, real or misconstrued, and the reduced level of trust that these possibilities engender.

   **a. To what extent do states still view the NPT as relevant?**

States that support the TPNW mostly see the NPT as having relevance because it can now utilise this new instrument to fulfil its obligations on disarmament, but some nuclear-armed states have expressed a worrying view that current global tensions require them to renegotiate or even abandon disarmament. The NPT can only maintain relevance if it does not become a charter for nuclear armed states like the UK to continue to modernise and utilise nuclear weapons without regard for new diplomatic efforts including the TPNW. Efforts to engage with member states that hold nuclear weapons and are not part of the NPT, in particular Israel, India and Pakistan can only be effective if there are transparent efforts towards disarmament.

   **b. What are the prospects for other components of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, such as the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT)?**

WILPF recognise that the CTBT has had a curbing effect that has been of benefit, particularly to women, and welcome these steps. We consider that early entry into force of the TPNW will have a welcome impact on ending nuclear proliferation even in advance of its acceptance by the existing nuclear armed states. It is essential that in preparing an agenda for the NPT Review in 2020 stat parties consider the possibility that the TPNW will have entered into force or be very close to that.
c. How important are these agreements to the wider rules-based international order?

Disarmament is for WILPF at the core of establishing the wider rules-based international order that we seek. This is why WILPF has always advocated this approach to intergovernmental differences since WW1, through the League of Nations and then the United Nations.

d. To what extent does the existence of three nuclear armed states outside the NPT (India, Israel and Pakistan) destabilise the overall regime?

The lack of movement to fulfil all three pillars of the NPT has led to other member states choosing to acquire the weapons that the P5 see as essential to their security. We consider this insistence to be destabilising for the disarmament regime, and the lives of women whose needs are not met because of a lack of the resources they need, which are deployed in nuclear weapons development.

e. What prospects are there for a Middle East WMD free zone?

WILPF expects that this can best be taken forward through active and open communication between the women in the region about how their lives can be made secure. The UK Government must address its obligations under Women Peace and Security framework in this context.

The United States

3. To what extent will the United States’ withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal, as well as US efforts to achieve the denuclearise of the Korean Peninsula, affect the wider nuclear non-proliferation regime?

WILPF considers that the US withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal is irresponsible, aggressive and undemocratic and as such, is destabilizing. WILPF supported the Women's Walk in the DMZ and commends their position, encouraging the UK government to engage with it.

4. To what extent and why are existing nuclear arms control agreements being challenged, particularly the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF) and the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), and what prospect is there for further such agreements? What prospects are there of progress in negotiating a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT)?

The volatile and polarised world order is creating new tensions as well as a sense of urgency in addressing them. WILPF are aware that without the clear aim of absolute prohibition leading to elimination, other components of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, however welcome, can be applied in ways that will not secure our objective of complete disarmament and can become divisive. Outside of universal prohibition, bilateral agreements can easily be broken and thus actively increase international tensions and create new risks as non partners line up to support one or other party. For this reason, we see that engagement with the TPNW is essential at least to the point where the objective of complete elimination is recognised as an essential objective, and we urge the UK Government to consider how it can engage with it at an early stage. With regard to the US threat to the INF, we encourage the Government in supporting the EU blocking blocking statute.
5. What effect will nuclear renewal programmes have on the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime? To what extent could technological developments—including in missile capabilities, warhead strength, and verification—undermine existing non-proliferation and arms control agreements?

The modernisation of the world’s nuclear arsenal is already having a destabilising effect and is seen by many as providing an impetus to nuclear proliferation and obfuscation of steps towards disarmament, where even the reduction in the number of weapons deployed is used to conceal from the public technical enhancements that increase the deadly impact - and the likelihood of use or accident. WILPF considers that it is essential that technological development is always transparent and never applied in ways that increase brinkmanship and the rhetoric of threat.

New technologies
6. To what extent will technological developments, both directly relating to nuclear weapons and in the wider defence and security sphere, affect nuclear diplomacy?

There exists very real and increasing threat of cyber attack and malware issues. Simple human error, design faults or system failure could be confused, causing aggressive responses and avoidable resultant attacks. WILPF would like to see technological developments utilised to increase transparency and share knowledge efficiently, accurately and quickly to reduce tensions within intergovernmental relations. There are new and unpredictable threats from climate change and the ability of governments to maintain weapons control in the face of threats from non state actors is increasing in ways that require a new and co-operative approach to nuclear diplomacy.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
7. If it were to enter into force, how would the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (commonly referred to as the Ban Treaty) affect efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and bring about disarmament?

The successful adoption of the agreement by the majority of the world’s countries is a significant shift in the global discourse on nuclear weapons and a major challenge to arguments about the necessity of these weapons for security. The new agreement fills a significant gap in international law, and strengthens the global taboo against the use and possession of nuclear weapons—challenging any notion that these are legitimate, acceptable weapons for certain nations. It clearly states that the use of nuclear weapons is contrary to international humanitarian law. One of the most unique aspects of the TPNW is that it is the only gender-sensitive nuclear weapons agreement in existence. This is because its preamble acknowledges the gendered dimensions of nuclear weapons, and was the result of civil society participation in the negotiations, along with the inclusion of evidence-led presentations to the diplomats. This approach to nuclear diplomacy opens up the way to a different sort of discourse, that is firmly removed from aggressive rhetoric. The P5
8. What are the policies of other P5 countries (China, France, Russia and the United States), and the UK’s other partners, on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and on nuclear weapons more generally? Have these policies changed, and if so, why? How effective has the P5 process been, and what role will it have in the future?

WILPF is very aware of the lack of any one size fits all policy on nuclear weapons across the P5, apart from an apparent reluctance to disarm or participate transparently in negotiations to that end, which we consider to represent a deterioration for global security.

The role of the UK

9. How effective a role has the UK played in global nuclear diplomacy in recent years? How could the UK more effectively engage on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament? What should the UK Government’s priorities be ahead of the 2020 NPT Review Conference?

WILPF recognises and welcomes the UK Government position in supporting the EU blocking statute of the US decision on the JOCPT. We would welcome a strong indication of willingness to fulfil the obligations that it has to fulfilling the disarmament commitments of the NPT, especially Article 6. The UK Government has made efforts to resist the new thinking or to participate in the work undertaken by the UN Open Ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament or the TPNW Conference, and this has reduced its credibility with governments across the world that seek a safer way to respond to unpredictable threats to the planet from climate change and the erosion of national boundaries as effective parameters for enduring security. We hope that the UK will engage with the TPNW and recognise the effect on its allies through divestment and stigmatisation of nuclear weapons doctrine as signatures and ratifications continue to be added.

The Government should be accountable and transparent in considering how it may engage with the inevitable impacts on the UK already under way from the TPNW as it attracts divestment and questions the value of nuclear alliances. It should address the constitutional and economic questions arising from Brexit, particularly as they impact on women who are already disproportionately impacted by austerity as the Government chooses to spend the resources they need on Trident.

The clear lack of mandate from Scotland on Trident or the TPNW must be addressed. The Government will need to consider its CEDAW obligations and its UNSCRs 1325 National Action Plans in relation to member states that sign the TPNW. Feminist economics demand that the UK Government’s economic policy include measures to take into account the disproportionate affects of economic harm to women of military spending and take steps to address this in their budgeting.

We ask the Government to commit to a ministerial level delegation at the NPT final Preparatory Conference, and that it should include representatives from Scotland where its nuclear weapons are based.

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