

UN High Level Meeting on the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
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Speech by Marie-Claire Graf

Global North Focal Point for YOUNGO – the official children and youth constituency of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

Let us imagine, your Excellency Mr. Abdulla Shahid, Honorable Heads of Governments, distinguished Heads of Delegations, world leaders and everyone watching online, a world where we do not have to fight for the elimination of nuclear weapons and climate justice? Let us imagine a world where eco-anxiety and nuclear threats are fears of the past, and where nuclear disarmament and climate stabilisation are taught in history classes as major achievements in the early 21st century? Let us imagine a world where we stand in unity for peace with each other, with nature and with our planet. Let us imagine we all have been part of these achievements, and that important milestones have been set at this UNGA.

My name is Marie-Claire. I am an activist and advocate for global climate justice and the elimination of nuclear weapons. I am speaking on behalf of concerned citizens, especially the current generation of youth as well as future generations. We are experiencing the effects of past and current decisions - not made by us youth, but which bind us with you in multiple existential crises, the most critical of which are the climate crisis and the nuclear threat. Both have trans-boundary and trans-generational impacts. Both require that global cooperation and common security take precedence over national self-interest and militarism.

I am honored to imagine and co-create a sustainable, safe and prosperous world together with you.

Youth are rising up, because we are imagining a sustainable world for us all. After seven massive global climate strikes, bringing millions to the streets, last Friday, hundreds of thousands of people in 99 countries took part in the Friday's for Future strike. I hope you and your kids had the chance to join and be part of this movement demanding unprecedented and urgent action to solve the climate crisis, as you all agreed on in Paris back in 2015. And that you also join with youth to create a nuclear-weapon free world as all governments agreed in the very first resolution of the United Nations.

We need to stabilise the climate no later than 2030 and to eliminate nuclear weapons no later than 2045, the 100th anniversary of the United Nations

We are committed to these goals. Are you? We are committed because we believe in the future - in a sustainable world for us all and for our next generations. For us there is no alternative. While many of us are on the frontlines we are not only victims, no, we are part of the solution. Hence we have the moral obligation and right to partake in climate and nuclear policy processes - to sit at the table with you when decisions are taken.

This includes decisions on budgets and investments. We need to end investments in the nuclear weapons and fossil fuel industries, and reinvest in peace, public health, renewable energy and sustainable development, as called for in Protect People and the Planet, the Global Appeal for a Nuclear Weapon Free World. Cutting the \$100 billion annual nuclear weapons budget is a good place to start.

Science is telling us that to keep 1.5 alive, we need an unprecedented transformation placing human security at the centre of decision-making. Science informs us that any use of nuclear weapons would have massive environmental and economic impacts - so governments must phase out their reliance on nuclear deterrence. In my imagination we co-create a world where there is no nuclear winter, no massive famine, nor contaminated waters, lands and crops.

We are at a break it or make it moment in human history. You are part of writing our history. You decide if we break it or make it. What do you hope future generations will remember about you?

For too long you and your predecessors played politics, being ignorant to us humans, nature and our planet. If we all follow our imagination and dreams of a more sustainable, prosperous and safe future, I am convinced we will make it. Will you act upon our imagination?