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**Peace**  
**TUC letter to Foreign Secretary**  
**March 2010**

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## **TUC calls on Government to support a nuclear-free world**

TUC General Secretary, Brendan Barber, has written to the Foreign Secretary, David Miliband, urging the UK Government to seize the opportunity in 2010 to work for a strong and successful conclusion to the UN nuclear non-proliferation treaty review conference in May, at which an International Trade Union Confederation global [petition](#) will be handed in calling for Governments to take further steps towards a nuclear-free world.

Dear David

### **Nuclear non-proliferation treaty review**

The TUC supports decisive international action for nuclear disarmament, and in particular clear steps towards this at the Review Conference of the Nuclear non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) this May at the United Nations in New York.

Currently, there are more than 23,000 nuclear warheads in existence, with a combined destructive power more than 400,000 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb of 1945. The NPT is the primary international instrument through which nuclear disarmament can become a reality, and provides an important means to help stop the spread of nuclear weapons to yet more states which have not declared nuclear weapons status, or to terrorist groups. In addition, in the depths of the current global economic crisis in particular, the tens of billions of dollars spent each year on developing and maintaining nuclear arsenals should be spent instead in meeting urgent social and economic needs both within nuclear-armed countries themselves and for development aid.

Recent indications from key nuclear powers that substantial reductions in weapons stockpiles are possible in the near future mean that this Review Conference has particular importance, and could provide a global impetus for real progress in ending the threat of nuclear war. The international trade union movement, through the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) of which our organisation is a member, has launched a campaign entitled "No to Nuclear Weapons", with a petition to be presented to the UN in May which has already received several million signatures. The key elements in this campaign, which is being conducted in

collaboration with other civil society organisations, include actions which we urge the British government to support during and beyond the Review Conference.

These include:

- promotion in international fora of the objectives of the NPT treaty, and encouragement to countries which are not yet signatories to ratify the treaty;
- support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty to enter into force as soon as possible;
- a rapid conclusion to the agreement on the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty; and
- support for negotiation of nuclear-free zones in every region.

We are seeking the attainment of the above objectives within a broader international framework to eliminate all weapons of mass destruction, and bring about substantial reductions in global military expenditure through transformation of military production into peaceful and socially-productive economic activity which provides decent livelihoods and meets real needs in society.

Realising the elimination of nuclear weapons will be no easy task, and cannot be achieved in isolation from related issues of international peace and security. Nevertheless, we urge the government to seize the opportunity in 2010 to work for a strong and successful conclusion to this NPT Review Conference, in the interests of all the people of our country and the world at large.

Yours sincerely

BRENDAN BARBER

General Secretary