

The Nuclear Weapons Convention: A Path to the Nuclear-Weapon-Free World by Jürgen Scheffran, Adjunct Associate Professor, ACDIS, University of Illinois, Champaign, Illinois, USA. **Abstract:** The current non-proliferation regime is unstable, as the emergence of the new de-facto nuclear weapon states India, Pakistan and North Korea has shown. The missing international legal ban on nuclear weapons complicates efforts to prevent further states and terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons. According to Article VI of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, nuclear weapon states are obligated to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. A nuclear-weapon-free world which removes nuclear weapons and the main incentives for their development would create security gains for all states. This paper argues that the transformation process towards a Nuclear Weapons Convention (NWC) which completely eliminates all nuclear weapons could integrate old and new elements of the nuclear control regime into a coherent comprehensive concept. This would include steps such as: de-alerting and a no-first use for nuclear weapons and further security guarantees, new nuclear-weapon-free zones, a deep reduction of the nuclear arsenals and delivery systems, a ban on nuclear-weapons materials, and a stop of nuclear weapons development. A Model NWC has been drafted in 1997 and updated in 2007 to prevent the construction of nuclear weapons and put the barrier for diverting nuclear-weapons-usable material as high as possible. Specific verification measures, going beyond safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), would discover clandestine nuclear-weapons-related activities with sufficient certainty, increasing transparency and confidence in the whole nuclear disarmament process. To minimize the security risks, a verification system is to be embedded into an effective regime of international security, involving governments as well as non-governmental organizations.