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Interview with Linnet Ng'ayu

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Summary:

Linnet Ng'ayu, trained in law and sociology, worked with the African Council of Religious Leaders to promote nuclear disarmament through humanitarian advocacy. She collaborated with religious and grassroots leaders to build awareness and push for Africa's participation in treaties like the TPNW. Ng'ayu highlights Africa's nuclear-free status under the Treaty of Pelindaba and the challenges of engaging governments often pressured by donor states. She advocates integrating disarmament efforts into broader peacebuilding initiatives while addressing pressing issues like small arms control

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Robin Möser: Okay, good morning. This is Linnet Ng'ayu from Nairobi, based in Nairobi, Kenya. She received training as a lawyer and sociologist, and she's an expert on humanitarian disarmament and government advocacy work. She worked for almost, and I find this striking, almost dedicate for the African Council of Religious Leaders, Religions for Peace, specializing in this position on humanitarian disarmament. And in that capacity, she worked with the 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate in the Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons, ICAN 2017, connected to the TPNW, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. And I saw that you changed jobs recently, so my questions target your previous work for the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL), if that's okay, because it's relevant for the project. Okay, having introduced you. My first question would be: how did you end up in the position with the African Council of Religious Leaders and what is your background academic training? How did your arrive in the position you held for almost a decade? Thank you!

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: So, thanks! My background is in sociology, as you mentioned, and I also have legal training. So, I'm a lawyer based in Nairobi, Kenya. And I've always wanted to see how do I integrate my sociology knowledge together with my legal knowledge. I think law is quite a technical subject, whereas sociology is more with communities. , the opportunity to work with the African Council of Religious Leaders came through working with different actors who understood, you know, integrating law and sociology and working within the NGO sector. So, this opportunity came up and it just happened that religious leaders had been part of the Arms Trade Treaty process. And they were also looking to see what is the next disarmament issue that needs to be addressed. So, at the point at which I was joining the African Council of Religious Leaders, they had already started discussions with ICAN, the International Campaign to Abolish nuclear weapons, on involving religious leaders on nuclear disarmament issues. So, when I came in, and with my legal background, they saw it a good fit for me to work within the disarmament program.

Robin Möser: Okay, thank you. And have you worked with other organizations focusing on nuclear disarmament before? Was this your first experience?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: This was my first experience. Before I was working within, you know, law firms and the Attorney General's Office. So, I had not previously worked on nuclear disarmament issues within the NGO sector before. Yes.

Robin Möser: And you were based in Nairobi, right?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yes, yes. All based in Nairobi.

Robin Möser: And why, if I'm allowed to ask, why did you end working with African Council of Religious Leaders?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Well, someone mentioned to me that, you know, okay, so my pupillage was at the Attorney General's office. And I got to understand there is more to know than going to court. Right. And I interacted a lot with the Treaty's Department within the State Law Office as well as the drafting of Treaties. Yeah, so I was interested in that. So, when the opportunity came up to be part of working within the NGO sector, but as a legal officer, that's what I thought I would be getting into. And then, you know, it became something completely different into advocacy and movement building and mobilization. I mean, it worked well for me. So, I wasn't per se looking for this particular space. I just found myself and grew into it. And it ended up being you know, what I'd always wanted to be doing, you know, that integration of social issues and legal issues, because I think it's important to find

legal solutions for social issues, so that you know, they are better entrenched within the framework of society. So I think, you know, I just find that it worked out well in the end.

Robin Möser: And I mean the whole movement around the TPNW and ICAN, when you started eight years back in 2015 or something, since then it developed quite a big momentum.

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Exactly. And I think it was also curiosity, because I understood that I would be going to work with religious leaders. I'm a religious person myself, so I wasn't sure how exactly I'm helping religious leaders. And you know, of course, the elements of the work now came out and it's about capacity building, helping religious leaders see the other side, but also it is my curiosity that motivated me to join the African Council of Religious Leaders.

Robin Möser: I see. And following up on that, how do you view the role of nuclear weapons in the world today? Do you see them as sort of a stabilizing factor in international politics? Do you think they matter?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Well, they might have, because it's something I mean, first of all, I don't see the importance of a handful of countries having the most catastrophic weapons on Earth. It matters that people are talking about this, and that people are following up, and people working on [nuclear weapons] within the different sectors, whether doctors, religious leaders, people within the climate movement. So, it's important that it is now an issue that is being talked about. The essence of having a few countries being able to mobilize themselves within a particular framework to protect themselves from... I guess they're protecting themselves from themselves, because they're not protecting anybody else. Because what happens to the rest of the world that has no nuclear weapons? What happens to, you know, the nuclear weapons free zone continents? What happens to the countries that are already nuclear weapons free states? So, I mean, I always find it a very difficult question to answer, because we don't need them. They just protect a few people from themselves so that they're able to trade threats amongst themselves and make the rest of us, you know, scared and align to what they think that the rest of the world should align to. Because I don't see why Kenya should align to the US or Israel, just because they need protection. I think we should be thinking about other issues that are should have more priority.

Robin Möser: I see. And where do you think the focus of the civil society should be when it comes to total elimination? What would be practical steps towards achieving this goal - normative pressure? Maybe you can tell more about how you approached this in your work when you were still with the Council. Thank you!

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: So, one of the things that we realized especially in Africa, is that, you know, this is not a subject matter that is an everyday conversation. Of course, you know, that we have the Treaty of Pelindaba. So African governments to a large extent have put that matter to rest. So, raising the interest of this particular subject within diplomatic circles or within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or defense ministries, sort of also opens up other cans of worms. I did find that our conversation sometimes would turn towards the Arms Trade Treaty, especially for countries that have not yet signed the arms trade treaties. And they would try and probably see this as a way to get them to sign the Arms Trade Treaty or to ratify the Arms Trade Treaty. So, in terms of, you know, getting to help people understand, public awareness and education was important. And because religious leaders are, you know, they do have influence on the society. So, we had different levels of ensuring you know, the

public at the congregational level is aware. So, this is you speaking to grassroots. Of course, the senior religious leaders are also aware, the National Council of Churches is aware, the Catholics, the bishops are aware of this issue. So, this is something that they can mention in their day to day. If you're going to release a communique or a statement, they're able to sign on to it. And especially at a regional level, because you are dealing with regional religious institutions. So, you'd have like the Anglican Church in Africa. You'd have like the evangelicals in Africa. So, if they sign on to that, then at least there's that opportunity for that regional movement. And then seeing how then do we tie it to what we call in Africa the Regional Economic Communities. We did have one or two visits to the East Africa Community. Which ended up not really working, I think, because the countries in the region were also not very open to the TPNW. Mainly because of pressure, you know, it's also an issue of pressure, especially from the nuclear weapons states.

Robin Möser: Sorry, if I may interrupt: "pressure", because they fear that the donors, who are at times nuclear weapons states, will cut funding for development?

Linneth Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Well, actually, it was just the countries themselves, you know, before 2017, before the negotiations started, there was the push by the nuclear weapon states in Africa, for, you know, don't vote this during the first committee and don't be part of the negotiations. Then, you know, 2017, then don't vote for the adoption, then, of course, in subsequent first committee meetings it was like, you know, don't vote for this. So, there was always that pressure. And you can say especially in Francophone Africa, which, at some point, it was, you know, the diplomats would really tell us... [I don't know if I want that published]. But you understand what I'm saying? So, that pressure, even if it's not documented and you can't put your hand on it, when you speak to diplomats, they will they indicate that, you know, this thing is not for voting? So, I think also the element of bilateral meetings with diplomats did help. So, since we were doing a lot of work in the region, if we got to a country we would see opportunities to either visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Defense and then collaborate with the National Red Cross movements, because ICRC is a really big champion on the TPNW. So, we were trying to ensure that also the national partners and the National Red Cross is part of our delegations to visit the different countries, the different ministries in their countries.

Robin Möser: So, you visited African state capitals, Kampala, Nairobi, Dar es Salaam. How did this unfold?

Linneth Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: So, the delegations that I was part of, we did go to Mali, we did meet the ministers in Mali, in Senegal, in the Benin, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and where I was not part of our delegation, but my seniors were in the delegations. What we'll do is go to the champions, what we call the champions are senior religious leaders. They will be in a delegation together with my seniors, and with someone from the Red Cross, and they would visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the Ministry of Defense. Okay, I see. So that's the kind of route we took in terms of that level of the of engagement, right. And then there's this scale down, of course, using women and youth leaders having trainings on nuclear disarmament, trying to show a correlation, because for us, to make it a priority, we really needed to show why nuclear weapons are an important issue. So, there was need to show that correlation between the ATT or explosive weapons and nuclear weapons, right. So, that they are able to understand the impact that, you know, the illegal proliferation of small weapons would not be as catastrophic as if, you know, a nuclear weapon detonation happened. So, that kind of correlation was

important, so that when they are doing their own internal or national campaigns, they are able to relate with the people they are speaking to. So, they're also working with women, religious leaders and youth leaders, especially for general campaigns.

Robin Möser: Would you say that the primary focus of African governments and government officials on small arms is due to the nature of this as a more pressing issue on the ground in many African states? Are the TPNW and nuclear disarmament issues are somewhat detached from their daily lives?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Absolutely, absolutely. I mean, one of the questions we always go to is: why are we thinking about nuclear weapons? Which country in Africa has nuclear weapons? So, you go down that same story: South Africa had nuclear weapons and then decommissioned. So why are we thinking about it? And then, you know, you will also tell them, you have the Treaty of Pelindaba. So, we signed, have you ratified it? Yes. So why are we thinking about this?

Robin Möser: Africa did his homework...

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: I know. Yeah. So, I mean, we should be telling them about the Arms Trade Treaty, you know, about health care and about food security. So goodness with some of the work that IPPNW has done in relation to nuclear disarmament is showing the catastrophic impact, you know, aligning it to food security, aligning it to climate change and the weather and what would happen in the event of a nuclear catastrophe. So, that impact and the effects is what we use as our counter.

Robin Möser: And also probably the impact of uranium mining and these kind of things.

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, but we didn't want to get a lot into that, because it's also a very controversial issue, especially if you talk about uranium in Tanzania and in the DRC. So, you could talk about it off the record, but on the record you don't want to touch uranium. Also, something that was a bit of a challenge is to talk about nuclear energy. So it was important to detach nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, especially for champion countries like Ghana, and I mean, South Africa was quite grounded. I mean, South Africa is grounded on nuclear disarmament matters. But some champions, you know, would want to know what happens to a nuclear energy project? So, if someone wants to be difficult, like Kenya, they will always insist on nuclear energy. That they want anything that will deter them from nuclear energy.

Robin Möser: I mean, several African countries aspire to have nuclear power. Okay, coming back to a broader issue. What do you see as the biggest failure in terms of arms control and nuclear disarmament since the end of the Cold War?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, I don't know if can answer your question. It's just really my opinion. I think that it's rather hypocritical that, you know, we have treaties like the NPT, but only a few people are supposed to have nuclear weapons, right? Only nine countries. So, the rest of us, we are not competent enough to have nuclear weapons. So, it's quite an insult. And there are issues of peacekeeping, you know, and conflict. The conflicts in Africa are so extensive, you know, it's hard to put a lid on what will happen in which country on which day. But we don't manufacture these weapons. So, I mean, whose failure is it, I mean who is failing at this? How do we have so many weapons roaming around in the world and in countries that are not producing them? But if you trace it back, you're able to figure out that it is in this country and this country that they are, you know, being

imported or exported from? So how do we address this? I think I'm trying to link it to the nuclear weapons issue in terms of how then are some countries then supposed to be good? So to speak.

Robin Möser: Do you mean some countries are considered morally better than others and are allowed to keep nukes?

Linnnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, the ones that are morally better and, you know, are competent and are able to regulate the use of whichever kinds of weapons. They are the ones who are setting rules. But they're the ones who are also setting off these issues into the rest of the world.

Robin Möser: Yes, and from an African perspective, I can imagine that it takes away the focus that is needed to address more pressing issues, when there are still countries out there who are not acting on Article Six of the NPT and starting to disarm. It's not African countries who are lacking behind in their disarmament commitments.

Linnnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: And you see, that's the insult, that's what the government's are always saying: Why should we be concerned? Let them finish themselves! I mean, we have a plague of arms control on our continent, that, you know, we are not the ones [with nuclear weapons]. Yeah. And governments will always tell you, we are not the ones who are the cause of these problems. Of course, there are some who are the cause. But at the end of the day, why should Africa be concerned about other people's problems? Why should, as they call it, the Global South be concerned with the Western issues? So, you see, the detachment sometimes with nuclear weapons. So the Cold War was about the West, dragging in Africa, Latin America and the rest of the continents. So, there is that issue of always being dragged into people's problems. So, there is Russia and the US. So why should they be told which country to support in this? You get I'm saying, it's hard to put a lid on it. But we always feel like we are being dragged into arguments of the Western world. So, I can't say whose failure it is. Maybe a failure for being dragged into it and not standing its ground, because we are afraid that probably development aid will be cut.

Robin Möser: So, that is what you would say has delayed disarmament.

Linnnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, there's the back and forth. There's also the political goodwill on both sides and the pressure to not act, because if you act there are strings attached.

Robin Möser: And resulting from this, what would you personally see as the most important milestones for the nuclear field? You sort of hinted at some parts, but what do you see needs to be done in order to get the ball rolling to actually having an impact?

Linnnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Well, I think the fact that there are treaties in place is very good. So, it is now about strengthening the norms, having more people within the different sectors speaking out, doctors speaking out, lawyers speaking out, people working on environmental issues speaking out, same for religious leaders. And it's speaking out so that the general awareness is growing. I think whenever there's general awareness, you'll find that when you call for action, people are more readily available because they understand the issue. So, it's important for people to understand the issues. And I think also a milestone is that quite a number of non-nuclear weapon states have already signed or ratified the TPNW. So, there is that push back against, you know, "being told what to do" or feeling that pressure or getting into bilateral discussions of do this or do that, you know, or this is attached to this. So, I think that's a good milestone and what we need more, of course, champion states. I know

that Nigeria really does hold the West African part of the continent together and would be important in pushing this agenda. Same with South Africa, pushing this agenda for Southern African states. I think Eastern Africa, there is still a big challenge with Kenya, which was or maybe still is, seems to be a regional leader. If it was also to push and you know, sign or ratify [the TPNW], then that gives other countries motivation and strength to be able to also sign or ratify. So, yeah, that's what I would say in terms of those two levels. Yeah.

Robin Möser: And coming back to the African Council of Religious Leaders. How would you say the nuclear disarmament issue fit into your organization's mission? I know you worked on peacebuilding, but could you say maybe something about the trajectory of this issue coming up in recent years? And then, how did you recruit new staff to be working on this? I'm interested in that, how it unfolded within your organization.

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: So, the African Council for Religious Leaders's main priority for is peace. Even the global movement is religions for peace. And religions for peace was formed in 1970 in the background of the Cold War, and also the NPT. So, religious leaders were afraid that, you know, there would be the use of nuclear weapons. So, bringing together religious leaders to ensure that there is peace, is one of the ways that religions for peace was formed. So definitely in Africa at the point at which the ATT, people were campaigning for the ATT, religious leaders were involved. There was a campaign, I forgot the name, I think it was "Arms Down" that was run by religious youth. So at the point at which in 2014 the humanitarian conferences were happening, and they had been part of the global discussions on the ATT, then nuclear disarmament was seen as something that was important for Africa's religious leaders to be part of, right. Because also, as I mentioned, the background of religions for peace being formed in 1970, was also under the background of the NPT. So that correlation, you know, it was just cascading now to Africa. Yeah, and then there is the element of the sanctity of life, all religions call for the sanctity of life. If these are the most catastrophic weapons on earth, then we need to have, you know, a push back for these weapons, for their use, you know, threatening their use. We need to ensure that our environment is safe. We did draw a lot of correlation with the Marshall Islands and the pollution. Also an example that we used in terms of education and awareness was Algeria. So, just to show people that, you know, these weapons have been tested, even if they were tested in the 60s and the 70s, the impact is still there. So, this is something we need to think about and be involved in. If we're not talking about it, somebody else will talk about it and make a decision. And you will not be at that decision-making table when they're making the decision. So it's good that your voices heard within that particular context. And so one of the activities that we did in 2014 was to have a round table with religious youth. That was the first thing we did, because we thought that one of the ways that we keep this alive is ensuring that there is a momentum by the youth; they'll be able to stage, you know, campaigns and speak up, go probably to radio stations and talk about this. So, we had a round table, awareness, we had some very good speakers. And then the next step was also bringing in the women. Their materials also tailored in terms of, you know, caring for the environment, the generational impact of nuclear weapons, especially from Hiroshima and Nagasaki, their studies done in Kazakhstan. So, we did that. I mean, it was important to tailor-made information for each group of people. And of course, the religious leaders, now the senior religious leaders, is ensuring that they will have talking points for when they meet, you know, with senior policy makers and decision makers.

Robin Möser: It makes total sense to bring in the youth, because they have to live with it the longest, so it makes total sense. And did you also cooperate with other partners or organizations and who would they be?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, so the National Red Cross is definitely one of the partners that we worked with. We also worked with the ICRC, they have an office in Nairobi. So, at least we were able to work together in terms of experts. Definitely, ICAN was very resourceful in connecting us to different experts whenever we needed them, especially for round tables. We also worked a lot with Peace Boat, so that we were able to work with Hibakusha and be able to get Hibakusha testimonies. And these were very impactful, you know, when people listened to Hibakusha testimonies. And of course, the IPPNW chapters in the different countries. But more so we worked with the one in Kenya, just because you are trying to ensure that Kenya is a champion state for the region.

Robin Möser: And ICAN has an office in Nairobi, right?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: No, no, no. So, the African Council is a steering group member of ICAN. So, we acted as the regional representative.

Robin Möser: So they approached you and asked whether you would be up to this task and then you worked closely with them and collaborated. Did they reach out to you because they were looking for an anchor in the region?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: So, I found that relationship with ICAN had already been set in motion, right. When I joined in 2014. Because in February, someone from the African Council of Religious Leaders who had attended the conference in Mexico, the conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons conference in Mexico. So, that relationship had already been established. And I believe it was there established from you know, the ATT circles. Yeah, because what most of these campaigns do, is to look who is working on disarmament issues in this country? Do you think they would be interested in working on explosive weapons or nuclear weapons or on killer robots, right? So, there's always that collaboration within the NGO sector. So, I believe that how is the African Council found themselves working on nuclear disarmament in the first place. But now, of course, because of having worked with them in 2014, 2015 and 2017, they did approach us, their international steering group did approach ACRL to see if they would be interested in sitting on the board, the International steering group. So that's the approach I would say, was done, you know. Asking us: would you want to be a member of the board and, you know, represent African interests on the board?

Robin Möser: Okay, thank you for this. And how do you perceive other actors such as academics or think tanks? And how do you engage, if at all, with these actors in your work?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, yes. So, definitely academics are important and so are think tanks, especially when you're in the same thought process and you're on the same side, right? Because the research is important, especially when you're able to correlate matters, you know. Like I mentioned, for Africa, and for some countries, where this is not a priority issue, you have to show people why this should be an issue. So that correlation, you know, if a researcher is helping us get data on what would be the impact of a nuclear detonation, say, between India and Pakistan, how would that impact be, say, on the climate? What would be the impact on food security? Then, you know, what would be the impact on the poverty levels? Say, on the general economic structure of your country? So, definitely, academia is important in that regard. And also, how can I say, when you're trying to show the

importance of a subject matter, it's important to be available. So, sometimes academia are seen as, you know, being locked away in a room in the university, working on papers, yes. So, when they show up in conferences, whether it's physical or virtual, that relationship is important, so that your work doesn't look so theoretical, because there is that aspect of maybe research being more theoretical than practical. So, the meeting of academics and practitioners is important and that learning and exchange. So, I remember we had an expert from UNIDO and they spoke to parliamentarians. Actually, it was an inter-ministerial meeting, because in Kenya, we had an inter-ministerial meeting between Defense, Foreign Affairs, Energy and other offices. There was another ministry I forgot. And the idea was then can we have a country position paper on this issue. So, definitely, having the different notes from different actors did work, okay. So, the academician then comes into to also fine tune the thought processes of everybody speaking, So, it's important, of course, to have those too within the nuclear disarmament conversation.

Robin Möser: So, would you say that think tanks are somewhat in between academics and the NGOs? Because they provide practical policy suggestions and may be more available than academics?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Yeah, I think so. I think so. I think sometimes is also with think tanks is, you know, I'll be on the same side. The problem sometimes also with think tanks is, you know, you may agree on this particular issue and you may not agree on another particular issue that the same thing tank is working on, right. So, that can sometimes bring about a conflict. That's where I would say sometimes there is a problem with think tanks when you bring them towards, you know, a mixed group of people or mixed policymakers. So, it depends on where are you bringing in this particular Think Tank.

Robin Möser: Okay. And concerning the African Council of Religious Leaders, how did your organization choose its staff? I mean, you were there early on, but when the momentum grew, how did you get people working on this issue, once the funding was there? Were there actually enough people qualified to work on the issue? Did they have experience with nuclear disarmament advocacy?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: So, what I would say is that we didn't have a budget line for staff, you know, the funding on nuclear disarmament was from ICAN. And this was to fund the activities. So, ACRL did a lot of co-funding with ICAN. So, let's say if there was a mission to a particular country, say Country A, we would ensure that within that particular activity, if let's say it's a three day meeting, would have a fourth day meeting so that we were able to take into account the work on nuclear disarmament, because their funding was not in such a way that it's able to cater for staff, it's able to cater for the activity and it's able to cater for the logistics. So, yeah, that was not really possible. So, co-funding was very essential to our work. And, you know, that was also our contribution as a steering group member. So, if you have money to be able to pay for hotel, you know, a conference package. Then the rest of the air tickets would come from a different project. Yeah. So that would mean I would then facilitate a meeting and then we'd get colleagues from ICAN or other experts coming in to facilitate.

Robin Möser: OK. And do you think the debate about global nuclear disarmament includes a recognition of the gendered impact of nuclear weapons? Do you think these aspects are heard or made visible?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: That's a bit difficult. I think when you're on the inside, you... So saying, I mean, because being inside the campaign, you can see the gendered impact of nuclear weapons. As to whether people outside there can see, I can only hope that from the awareness people are able to see. I know that we did a lot of awareness in terms of gendered impacts, especially working with women religious leaders. But can't for sure, say that, you know, it's seen from the outside. From the inside the actors and the practitioners see it, but on the outside, I don't know if it can be seen.

Robin Möser: Okay. Do you think that the ACRLs voice is heard and represented in ICANs leadership decisions concerning its campaign?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Well, when I was working there, yes. Right now, I can't speak to it, but I believe that when I was working our voice was heard, and that was one of the reasons why we received the invitation to be part of the board. Because they were able to see the work that we've done in Africa. And that we've been able to engage religious leaders. So, I would say yes, at the point at which I was working there, I did feel I did see that our voice was heard.

Robin Möser: And do you also think that through your engagement the visibility of your organization has increased over the years when you worked on TPNW-related issues?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: I believe so. I think that ACRL did grow in terms of the lead in nuclear disarmament, to a certain level that even Religions for Peace Global did refer us as the focal point in leading the Religions for Peace Global Movement to lead nuclear disarmament. So yeah,

Robin Möser: I see. Now coming to a rather large question: how would you define success in your field? And can you give an concrete example of success?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: Success - how do you measure success? This is the big question that practitioners, I think, in every field have. But I think the fact that every national inter-religious council affiliated to Religions for Peace knows about nuclear disarmament, I think that's a success. And especially in Africa, the fact that if you pulled aside any senior religious leader in Africa and asked them "what do you think about nuclear weapons?", they'll probably be able to say "you know, they are morally and ethically wrong". And I think that our stand as part of ACRL is this, you know, it would not be a new topic for them. So, I think that's a success. Whereas, you know, if we had not done this work at all, this will be still a fairly new thing, you know, probably just seeing on the news and all that. So, I think I would measure that a success. And, of course, the fact that, you know, ICAN did receive the Nobel Peace Prize and we were part of that process. And ACRL has a replica of the Nobel Peace Prize medal. And that was also a very good campaign tool, especially after 2017, you know, going to the different policymakers, them seeing the medal and explaining why ICAN was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. And, you know, for them, seeing that achievement and letting them know that this was as a result of your votes, you're 42 votes on the TPNW. So, you're also in this in terms of an African leader. So, that definitely is a success. And also seeing that more and more diplomats, you know, recognize nuclear disarmament as an issue. As a priority matter and as an issue to think about. Definitely. That's something I can say that is a success.

Robin Möser: And connected to this: how would you describe or define impact in your field? And can you also give an example of an impact the ACRL achieved while you were there? Maybe you can dwell a little on this.

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: I'd say the impact of the work that religious leaders do, I can say for in Benin and in the Seychelles, did bear fruit because, you know, those two countries did a ratify. Then we had some religious leaders who were really pushing for that in their country. So, the result was also other religious leaders, you know, wanting to learn from that experience and hopefully replicating that in their own countries. So, I'll say that it was impactful. The fact that, you know, you'll be able to work through, sensitize, educate, and finally get the outcome that you're looking for. And then hopefully other people would want to replicate or be part of that learning process and scale it up. I think, I would say that, yeah.

Robin Möser: I see. And this is my last question now: What are your main expectations for the future of the field and where do you expect the nuclear field to go in the next 5, 10 or 50 years. And it's your personal view, I would be interested in.

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: While I'm hoping for the total disarmament not too far ahead, I don't know if that will happen in 2 or 5 years. Because as the years go by, and as people change, you know, also tempers continue to flare between countries. And sometimes they feel like it's only a matter of time before one person decides, , you know, enough is enough, going to press this button. So, it's hoping that, you know, there's always a sane person in office. And it's unfortunate that the rest of the world has to live at the mercy of nine countries. So, I wouldn't say I'm optimistic, I'm pragmatic. I just hope that it doesn't happen. We can only continue the work such that the deterrence, they're looking for in terms of nuclear weapons, that this voice will deter them from actually pressing on those buttons. That they are aware that we know that they think it is an option, but we are telling them that it's not an option. It's not an option that this is done.

Robin Möser: And what about the TPNW and its future as well as the nuclear weapons states acting on Article Six of the NPT - how do you see that in the future developing?

Linnet Loise Wairimu Ng'ayu: I think that the TPNW will continue being a treaty to look out for. Sometimes with treaties, you've seen that even the ones that have been supported by the so called strong countries, at some point they've lulled. And the good thing about the TPNW is that it was formulated and brought to life by people who really have a lot to lose if this if this happens. So, I feel like that momentum for the TPNW will continue being renewed. Even as people get To know about it and as new people join the campaign. It will be important to keep ensuring that governments are aware, campaigners are letting new people and new administration becoming aware. So, that where there is no signature and there is no ratification, a new administration is an opportunity to get that, you know, that ratification or that accession. At the same time for also new people within the different sectors, you know, environment and health, lawyers and academicians, to also renew, with the new people coming in, it would really help a lot if, say, this was part of the school curriculum at different levels. Whether it's high school or at the university. So to ensure that during the Conference of States Parties that there is a lot of noise around the TPNW, because that's the one time that this is able to be pushed forward for the general public to be aware. So, increase and continue maintaining the momentum on public awareness and ensuring that the diplomats are on their toes and countries on their toes. Of course, issues of implementation, you know, what are the legal hurdles coming in? How do we correlate every new trend with the TPNW? You know, so that it's always top of mind. I think ensuring that it's a top of mind will keep it as a strong and relevant treaty.

Robin Möser: Thank you. I will stop the recording now. Unless you have anything to add.