

Report: For a Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World

New York City: April 30 – May 4, 2010

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In what has been described as “a brilliant success” and “breaking new ground,” between April 30 and May 4, 2010, an International Planning Committee (IPC) organized a series of events designed to impact the governmental debate during the month-long Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference at the United Nations and to reinforce and encourage movement building and cooperation among non-governmental organizations at community, national, and international levels.

High points of our activities included the truly international conference, “For a Nuclear Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World,” held April 30 – May 1 at the historic Riverside Church, where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his prophetic speech, “Beyond Vietnam, A Call to Conscience,” in 1967. Co-sponsored by the Mission & Social Justice Ministry of the Riverside Church, the conference brought together 1,000 leading activists from roughly 25 countries (half from the U.S.), providing a unique forum for information exchange, planning and coordination in connection with the NPT Review Conference, and laying the groundwork for longer term strategic planning for collaborative nuclear abolition, peace, justice and environmental initiatives.

The May 2 international rally in Times Square, march to the United Nations, and peace festival in Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, brought together 15,000 activists, making it the largest peace demonstration in the United States since the 2008 election campaign. We also coordinated the May 4 presentation, in the UN General Assembly Hall, of over 17 million petition signatures, collected mainly in Japan, Europe and the United States, urging commencement of negotiations on a treaty to abolish nuclear weapons, to Review Conference and United Nations officials. *We note in particular the following achievements (partial list):*

- We created a new, dynamic and truly collaborative international grouping working for the abolition of nuclear weapons in a broader context. The IPC is comprised of representatives of 25 national and international organizations in Japan, the U.S., Europe and Israel, and our *Disarm Now! Call to Action* was endorsed by more than 300 organizations around the world. Unique to this grouping, as reflected in its *Disarm Now! Call* and the IPC’s *Declaration*, endorsed by the April 30-May 1 Conference, is the shared understanding that successful campaigning for nuclear weapons abolition requires understanding of the relationship of nuclear weapons to other issues of peace, justice and environmental sustainability and the need to better integrate these struggles. The *Call* and *Declaration* provide a vision for future activities by the IPC and allied organizations. The *Declaration* was endorsed by the 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons on May 8.
- UN and NPT officials and a number of governmental delegations were aware of, and in some cases responded to, our presence. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations accepted our invitation to address our conference and made a compelling speech, stressing the urgent necessity to abolish nuclear weapons and announcing his intention to travel to Hiroshima in August to repeat his call for a nuclear free world. The Secretary-General recognized the hard work, dedication and sacrifices of the assembled audience, adding, “I know how much courage it takes to speak out, to protest, and to carry the banner of this most noble human aspiration - world peace. . . . I especially welcome your support for the idea of concluding a Nuclear Weapon Convention. . . . Above all, continue to be the voice of conscience. We will rid the world of nuclear weapons. And when we do, it will be because of people like you. The world owes you its gratitude.” We were subsequently informed by a UN official that “[T]he event certainly made an impression on those from the UN who attended.”

- In the spirit of Dr. King's legacy, the conference opened with a powerful plenary session examining the role of nuclear weapons in perpetuating militarism, global injustice, and environmental degradation. Attendees took part in 26 workshops that addressed a wide array of nuclear disarmament, peace, justice and environmental issues. These workshops provided important opportunities for international education, information exchange, in-depth discussion and planning for future campaigns and initiatives.
- The conference and rally provided platforms for religious leaders and representatives of organized labor to more deeply engage in struggles for nuclear abolition. These included officials of the U.S. National Council of Churches, the World Council of Churches, and the International Trade Union Confederation. The interfaith service held before the rally on May 2 was featured on national U.S. Television (Public Broadcast Service).
- The conference and rally provided opportunities for local elected officials from around the world to engage with non-governmental organizations. Members of Mayors for Peace, the International Association of Peace Messenger Cities, and Parliamentarians for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Disarmament participated in workshops, spoke at the rally and presented petitions to the UN. Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba of Hiroshima, President of Mayors for Peace, gave an inspiring speech in the closing plenary of the conference.
- A unique dimension of our organizing was the broad and deep engagement of the Japanese peace movement. This included the participation of some 100 Hibakusha (A-bomb survivors), the presence and active participation of more than 2,000 Japanese activists – including follow on visits and events by more than 400 activists in seven U.S. cities, and the active participation of the mayors and City Council Presidents of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.
- Our mobilization provided the occasion for participating organizations to engage in numerous side events during the Review Conference, as well as creative acts of nonviolent direct action, the most dramatic of which were undertaken by French and youth activists.
- Attention to facilitating roles and participation of young activists, especially the European Ban All Nukes Generation and the U.S. Think Outside the Bomb youth and student networks, assisted the development of the rising generation of abolition activists. The May 2 rally served as the kick off for the Think Outside the Bomb national tour that will culminate at the Los Alamos Nuclear Weapons Lab in New Mexico in August.
- Our ambitious activities were entirely self funded by the endorsing and participating organizations.
- The IPC is engaged in discussions that will continue through the summer and early fall about possible future collaborative campaigns.

For the full list of endorsing and participating organizations, the *Disarm Now! Call to Action*, the IPC *Declaration*, video clips, photographs, news reports and more, visit: www.peaceandjusticenow.org

International Planning Committee: Ray Acheson – *Reaching Critical Will*; Colin Archer – *International Peace Bureau*; Reiner Braun – *International Network of Engineers and Scientists for Global Responsibility*; Jackie Cabasso – *Western States Legal Foundation, United for Peace and Justice*; Arielle Dennis – *Le Mouvement de la Paix*; Bruce Gagnon – *Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space*; Joseph Gerson – *American Friends Service Committee*; Socorro Gomes – *Centro Brasileiro de Solidariedade aos Povos e Luta pela Paz*; Kate Hudson – *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*; Akira Kawasaki – *Peace Boat*; Hans Lammarent – *Bombspotting*; Margo LaZaro – *Global Family*; Thomas Magnusson – *International Peace Bureau*; Judith LeBlanc – *Peace Action*; Narae Lee – *Peace Boat*; Dominique Lalanne – *Abolition 2000*; Henry Lowendorf – *Greater New Haven Peace Council*; Issam Makhoul – *Emil Touma Institute for Palestinian and Israeli Studies*; Al Marder – *International Association of Peace Messenger Cities*; George Martin – *Peace Action*; Kevin Martin – *Peace Action*; Alice Slater – *Abolition 2000*; Susi Snyder – *Abolition 2000*; Hiroshi Takakusaki – *Gensuikyō*; Yayoi Tsuchida – *Gensuikyō*; Pierre Villard – *Le Mouvement de la Paix*; Alyn Ware – *Abolition 2000*; Rick Wayman – *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*; Dave Webb – *Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament*; Cheryl Wertz – *Peace Action NYS*