

Peace and Planet Mobilization for a Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World

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The Peace and Planet Mobilization for a Nuclear-Free, Peaceful, Just and Sustainable World emerged out of last year's Annual General Meeting of the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons. Looking ahead at that time to the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, we discussed and debated "what comes next." We recognized the deep flaws in the NPT and the failure of the NPT Review process to move us closer to a world without nuclear weapons. But we nonetheless saw the importance of a strong, visible civil society presence at the 2015 Review Conference that would bring a clarion call for negotiations to begin immediately on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Peace and Planet was organized by an International Planning Group made up of representatives from 11 international organizations and 43 organizations based in 12 countries.

We issued our Call to Action on September 26, 2014, the first International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, urging "all people who hope to build a fair, democratic, ecologically sustainable and peaceful future to join us in New York City and around the world for international days of action" on the eve of the NPT Review Conference. It reads, in part:

"We issue this call at a crucial juncture in history, a moment when the unresolved tensions of a deeply inequitable society, great power ambitions and the destructive effects of an unsustainable economic system are exploding into overlapping crises. Tensions among nuclear-armed countries are rising amidst circumstances that bear worrisome resemblances to those that brought the world wars of the last century. For the first time in the nuclear age we are in a sustained global economic crisis that is deepening the gulf between rich and poor in a starkly two-tier world. Both climate change and fossil fuel-based economies generate conflicts within and among states. Extreme economic inequality and the economic policies that create it, NATO's aggressive expansion, struggles over diminishing fossil fuels, food price spikes and crop failures drive wars and revive arms races from Iraq to Syria to Ukraine to South Asia and the Western Pacific. We face a moment in which policies that benefit a fraction of the world's population feed conflicts that could precipitate catastrophic wars, even nuclear wars, and in which the power to make war is wielded by largely unaccountable elites."

The Call to Action also highlighted the challenge in the International Court of Justice initiated a year ago by the Republic of the Marshall Islands, urging the ICJ to find the nine nuclear-armed states in noncompliance with their obligations to disarm under international law.

"This courageous action by direct victims of nuclear colonialism reminds us that disarmament depends on collective action by the people of the world, using all available peaceful means. We urge governments of non-nuclear weapons States to participate by intervening in the Marshall Islands cases or by filing their own parallel applications."

The Peace and Planet Mobilization was endorsed by a diverse array of 353 organizations in 20 countries, including faith-based groups, organizations dedicated to peace and disarmament,

development, social justice, climate change and environmental issues and organizations of social workers, educators and academics, scientists and engineers, women, labor, youth, veterans and lawyers – a testament to our common vision.

Peace and Planet weekend opened Friday evening April 24, with an international conference in the historic Cooper Union Hall. On Friday and Saturday, 600 participants heard from hibakusha, scholars, parliamentarians, mayors and leading activists, meeting in plenaries and workshops to explore ways to weave our issues together and strengthen our movement.

Sunday, April 26 began with an interfaith convocation followed by a rally in Union Square. Seated in front were 80 hibakusha. The high point was the launch of the “Global Peace Wave.” At the appointed time, giant cardboard cut-out hands were raised and people as far as the eye could see “waved goodbye to nuclear weapons.” The Global Wave went westward, by time zone, with more than 100 actions around the world, arriving back at the UN 24 hours later for the opening of the Review Conference.

From the rally, 7,500 people marched to Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza carrying colorful signs and banners, singing and chanting. Over 1000 people had come from Japan, and 90 from France. Others came from Germany, the Marshall Islands, Korea, Norway, Sweden, the UK, Scotland, Cameroon, Brazil, Nepal, the Netherlands, Canada, Kazakhstan, Belgium, Lithuania, the Philippines, the Czech Republic and Greece, and from across the United States.

At Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, the crowd was greeted by UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Angela Kane and Ambassador Taous Feroukhi, President of the 2015 Review Conference, who graciously accepted over 7 million signatures on petitions collected by Gensuikyo (the Japan Council Against A and H Bombs), Mayors for Peace, and Peace and Planet. Our message is clear:

- We call upon the parties to the NPT to use the 2015 Review Conference to immediately, without delay, develop a timetable to ban and eliminate all nuclear weapons.
- We call upon the four states outside the Treaty that have nuclear arms, India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan, to join this process, immediately and without delay.

We say: Yes to a Nuclear-Free World! Yes to Nonviolence! Yes to Economic Justice and Environmental Sustainability! Yes to Peace!!

Presented by Jackie Cabasso on behalf of the Peace and Planet International Planning Group. For the International Planning Group members, the full text of the Call to Action, a list of endorsing organizations and additional information, please visit www.peaceandplanet.org