

VITAL SIGNS

WORLD PHYSICIANS TO OBAMA AND MEDVEDEV: ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Physicians understand that they must work to prevent what they can't treat. For almost 50 years they have persistently advocated to world leaders that the only way to prevent nuclear war is to eliminate these instruments of mass extermination altogether. From the physician's perspective, the prognosis is simple: either we will abolish nuclear weapons or they will abolish us.

On March 23, more than 300 of the world's top physicians—senior faculty and deans of medical schools, heads of medical associations, health ministers, medical journal editors, and Nobel laureates from 39 countries—called on US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dmitri Medvedev to confront “this gravest threat to human

survival” and to “end the nuclear weapons era once and for all.”

The release of the Appeal immediately preceded the first meeting of the two leaders at the G-20 summit in London. Presidents Obama and Medvedev emerged from that meeting saying that a nuclear-weapons-free world was their common goal. A few days later, in Prague, Obama acknowledged that the US, “as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon...has a moral responsibility to act.”


The letter, (see *pgs. 4 and 5*), is the latest expression of revulsion against nuclear weapons in a decades-long medical movement that was called into existence by the US atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Despite significant reductions in arsenal sizes since the end of the Cold War, the US and Russia still have more than enough nuclear weapons kept at the ready today to kill everyone on Earth. Even 100 Hiroshima-size warheads, exploded over megacities, could cause a sudden global cooling, the disruption of agriculture worldwide, and the

deaths of a billion people who already live on the margins of starvation. That's after killing tens of millions of people outright.

What more do we need to know? If 100 bombs can kill a billion people, can anything justify the shame and hypocrisy of owning them at all?

That's what these leaders in global medicine are asking presidents Obama and Medvedev to consider in the months ahead, as they discuss their options in leading us to a nuclear weapons-free world.

“A thousand years from now,” they have told the presidents of the two largest nuclear powers, “no one will remember most of what you will do over the next few years; but no one will ever forget the leaders who abolished the threat of nuclear war.” 

What more do we need to know? If 100 bombs can kill a billion people, can anything justify the shame and hypocrisy of owning them at all?



ONLINE: IN THE NEWS

Medical appeal signed by senior faculty and deans of medical schools, heads of medical associations, health ministers, medical journal editors, and Nobel laureates from 38 countries.

IPPNW.ORG/NEWS/MEDICALAPPEAL.HTM

AIMING FOR PREVENTION UPDATE

A GLOBAL HEALTH AGENDA TO PRIORITIZE VIOLENCE PREVENTION

WHO'S VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE




PHOTO: DRS. CHRIS MIKTON (LEFT) AND ALEX BUTCHART LEAD VIOLENCE PREVENTION ALLIANCE MEETING AT PAHO HEADQUARTERS IN WASHINGTON, DC.



VPA PARTICIPANTS SHARE AN EVIDENCE-BASED PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH THAT TARGETS THE RISK FACTORS LEADING TO VIOLENCE AND PROMOTES MULTI-SECTORAL COOPERATION.


IPPNW is an active participant in the World Health Organization's Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), an international network of organizations, agencies, and NGOs committed to the common vision of using science to prevent violence and to implement the recommendations of the World Report on Violence and Health. Aiming for Prevention coordinator Maria Valenti attended the

recent VPA annual meeting held at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) headquarters in Washington, DC.

An important focus was how to build on the recently launched WHO/VPA document *Preventing Violence and Reducing Its Impact: How Development Agencies Can Help*, which highlights the many ways violence hampers development, calls for increased attention by development agencies to violence prevention, and greater investment in evidence-based violence prevention strategies. Violence as a social determinant of health was discussed, along with the adverse affect violence has on achievement of the MDGs. A central discussion involved how to design a strategy for making violence prevention a political priority in the global health agenda. 

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND THE UN MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the Millennium Declaration that was adopted by 189 nations during the UN Millennium Summit in September 2000. Violence, especially collective, community, and armed violence, impedes progress in achieving all of the MDGs, not just the obvious ones. For example, Goal 7, which is to ensure environmental sustainability, is hampered by the toxic legacy of war and the ravaging of resources during conflict. At the same time, conflicts can be sparked by competition for resources includ-

ing land, water, and precious minerals, creating a vicious feedback loop of environmental degradation and more conflict. 

Eight Millennium Development Goals

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|--|---|--|--|
| <p>1 </p> <p>ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER</p> | <p>2 </p> <p>ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION</p> | <p>3 </p> <p>PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN</p> | <p>4 </p> <p>REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY</p> |
| <p>5 </p> <p>IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH</p> | <p>6 </p> <p>COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES</p> | <p>7 </p> <p>ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY</p> | <p>8 </p> <p>DEVELOP GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT</p> |

EACH OF THE EIGHT GOALS BREAK DOWN FURTHER INTO 21 QUANTIFIABLE TARGETS THAT ARE MEASURED BY 60 INDICATORS.

ONLINE: UN GOALS
 READ THE CONCRETE PLANS AND PRACTICAL STEPS FOR ACTION TO ACHIEVE MDGS BY 2015

UN.ORG/MILLENNIUMGOALS

SOURCE: UN.ORG

IPPNW AFFILIATE MEMBERS' PAPERS IN SPECIAL SECTION OF UK PUBLICATION



Publishing about our Aiming for Prevention work is an excellent avenue to educate and activate on our issues. IPPNW recently helped facilitate a special section in Vol

24, No. 4, *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* (MC&S), on the prevention of injuries caused by violence. The papers prompted inquiries from a physician in Ghana who sought information about our African multi-center injury research project, and from the WHO European Centre for Environment and Health regarding engaging health professionals in advocacy against gun violence. MC&S is an international journal for anyone interested in health aspects of violence and human rights, and an official journal of IPPNW and MEDACT, IPPNW's UK affiliate.

The special section on violence prevention in *Medicine, Conflict and Survival* included the following papers, by some IPPNW affiliate members:

Guest Editorial: An armed violence prevention and reduction agenda
Author: R Muggah

Implementing a hospital based injury surveillance system in Africa: lessons learned
Authors: DE Zavala; S Bokongo; IA John; IM Senoga; RE Mtonga; AZ Mohammed; W Odhiambo Anjanga; P Olupot-Olupot

Implementing a hospital based injury surveillance system: a case study in Nigeria
Authors: IA John; AZ Mohammed; S Lawoko; CA Nkanta; A Frank-Briggs; HC Nwadiaro; M Tuko; DE Zavala; ES Kolo; MA Ramalan; DE Bassey; E Didi

Implementing a hospital based injury surveillance system in Zambia: a preliminary report
Authors: RE Mtonga; DE Zavala

Engaging health professionals in advocacy against gun violence
Author: AD Pinto

Relevance and application of TEACH-VIP: perspective from a developing nation - India
Author: S Malhotra

ONLINE: PUBLICATIONS

Abstracts are online, and full papers can be obtained by contacting the lead author.

IPPNW.ORG/PROGRAMS/AFP/PUBS.HTML

VITAL SIGNS INTERVIEW: ANDREW PINTO, MD

Dr. Andrew Pinto is a family physician and a member of Physicians for Global Survival (PGS) in Canada. He is currently pursuing a specialty in public health at the University of Toronto.

VS: Was there something specific that happened that prompted you to become involved in joining IPPNW and working for peace?

AP: I was incredibly fortunate to complete my undergraduate degree at McMaster University, where I met [IPPNW's] Joanna Santa Barbara, Vic Neufeld, Neil Arya and others who were engaged in "peace through health."

VS: Can you tell us what special expertise health professionals bring to preventing violence?

AP: They see violence right before their eyes. They also see the harm that is caused to people by how we've set up society, what we call "structural violence." The special expertise of health professionals is in their ability to bear witness through speaking out, to analyze and measure, to look "upstream" to root causes, and to communicate to the general public.

VS: What historical role have health professionals played in speaking out against war and militarism?

AP: The founding of the International Committee of the Red Cross in 1863 was a major milestone. The atrocities committed by Nazi physicians promoted the need for a Universal Declaration of Human Rights. During the Cold War, IPPNW and other organizations spoke out about the risk of nuclear war, emphasizing the



PHOTO: DR. PINTO SPOKE ON A PANEL AT A CONFERENCE IN DURBAN, SOUTH AFRICA CALLED "DRIVING CHANGE: DEVELOPING FIREARMS POLICIES FOR SAFER SOCIETIES."

lack of a medical response. Recently, health professionals have spoken out about the terrible impact of war on civilians in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

VS: You say that calculating the cost of gun violence can be powerful information in advocacy.

AP: If we could calculate the cost to individuals, families and society of acts of gun violence, I think this would be powerful information. It would encourage civil society to say "no more", and also motivate politicians to look at gun control as cost effective, as well as the morally right course of action.

VS: What are the major challenges to health professionals in undertaking advocacy on limiting gun violence?

AP: Many countries that are experiencing armed violence are low-income and do not have the resources to collect [research] information. In addition, with advocacy work, one does not want to undermine local voices. One has to be very careful when speaking on behalf of those who have experienced gun violence. Finally, one must address complex political and economic forces that drive the arms trade.



ONLINE: DR. ANDREW PINTO
Read the full interview

IPPNWEUPDATE.WORDPRESS.COM

MEDICAL APPEAL FOR A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS



THE TIME HAS COME TO NEGOTIATE
A NUCLEAR WEAPONS CONVENTION

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Abraham Behar, MD [France]
Kennette Benedict, PhD [USA]
Prof. Julie Bines [Australia]
Galina I. Bisharova [Russia]
Prof. Dr. Alfred Böcking [Germany]
Dr. med. Renate Böhm [Germany]
Boris B. Bondarenko [Russia]
Prof. Dr. Jens - R. Allenberg [Germany]
Robert Arnold, MD [USA]
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Peter Alan Banks, MD [USA]
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Jeffrey C. Bass, MD [USA]
Susan E. Bennett, MD [USA]
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Frederick B. Berrien [USA]
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Soo Borson, MD [USA]
Akke Botzen, MD [Netherlands]
Melhim Bou Alwan, MD, AOA [Lebanon]
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Derman Boztok, MD [Turkey]
Nurlan Brimkulov [Kyrgyzstan]
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Frank Bruns, MD [USA]
Helen Caldicott, MD [Australia]
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Christine Cassel, MD [USA]
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Evgeni Chazov, MD [Russia]
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Prof. Dr. med. Ingrid Fohlmeister [Germany]
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Bryan Furnass, AM, DM [Oxford],
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Cholpon Galieva [Kyrgyzstan]
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Rohan Ganguli, MD [USA]
Natalya A. Garkavenko [Ukraine]
Vladimir A. Garkavenko [Russia]
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Bjorn Hilt, MD [Norway]
Prof. Dr. Rainer Hoehne [Germany]
Tordis Sørensen Høifødt, MD, PhD [Norway]

Dear Presidents Obama and Medvedev:

For more than 60 years the threat of nuclear annihilation has hung over humanity. We write to you now with great hope that you will seize the opportunity created by your recent elections to address definitively this gravest threat to human survival.

The United States and Russia continue to possess enormous arsenals of nuclear weapons originally built to fight the Cold War. If these instruments of mass extermination ever had a purpose, that purpose ended 20 years ago. Yet the US and Russia still have more than 20,000 nuclear warheads. Most dangerously, more than 2,300 of them are maintained on high alert status. They are mounted on missiles and can be launched in a matter of minutes, destroying cities in each other's countries a half hour later. A study published in 2002 showed that if only 300 of the weapons in the Russian arsenal attacked targets in American cities, 90 million people would die in the first half hour. A comparable US attack on Russia would produce similar devastation. Furthermore, these attacks would destroy the entire economic, communications, and transportation infrastructure on which the rest of the population depend for survival. In the ensuing months the vast majority of people who survived the initial attacks in both of your countries would die of disease, exposure, and starvation.

But the destruction of Russia and the United States is only part of the story. An attack of this magnitude would lift millions of tons of soot and dust into the upper levels of the atmosphere blocking out sunlight and dropping temperatures across the globe. In fact, if the whole of your strategic arsenals were involved, average surface temperature would fall to levels not seen on Earth since the depth of the last ice age 18,000 years ago. Agriculture would stop, ecosystems would collapse, and many, many species, perhaps even our own, would become extinct.

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Even a limited war involving only 100 Hiroshima-sized bombs would cause enough climate disruption to provoke a global famine that we have reason to fear could kill up to one billion people. Such a war might involve other nuclear weapons states, such as India or Pakistan. This finding underlines the urgency of getting all nuclear weapons states to renounce their nuclear arsenals. It also underlines the urgency of "getting to zero" — eliminating all of your nuclear weapons, since even 50 weapons in each of the US and Russian arsenals would pose a threat to the entire globe.

We therefore call on you, as the leaders of the countries which possess more than 95 percent of the world's nuclear weapons, to meet your obligations under Article VI of the Non- Proliferation Treaty by committing the US and Russia to a Nuclear Weapons Convention that will abolish all nuclear weapons, and by immediately initiating negotiations with the other nuclear weapons states to conclude such a treaty.

Make no mistake — you have the power to end the nuclear weapons era once and for all. With this power comes an awesome responsibility. You face many urgent crises at this difficult moment, but they all pale in comparison to the need to prevent nuclear war. There have been a few other times during the nuclear era when it might have been possible to abolish nuclear weapons, but we failed

to act. The current moment may be our last chance. A thousand years from now no one will remember most of what you will do over the next few years; but no one will ever forget the leaders who abolished the threat of nuclear war.

Few in history are given the chance to do great good. You have been given the opportunity to save the world. Please do not fail us.

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TRAINING FUTURE PEACE ACTIVISTS

DR. CAECILIE BUHMANN OF IPPNW DENMARK HAS DEVELOPED A SERIES OF INTERACTIVE TRAINING MODULES ON **PEACE THROUGH HEALTH**, DESIGNED TO EDUCATE AND EMPOWER HEALTH PROFESSIONALS AS ADVOCATES FOR PEACE

“ This training not only trained me, but inspired me to do the same. I have never felt more confident about myself. I started with very little and got a lot back. I hope and pray to spread the message. ”

Hafsatu Garba Bawa
Peace Through Health Training participant

With the assistance of IPPNW-Nigeria, Dr. Buhmann recently conducted a well-received 3-day training of trainers in Kano, Nigeria.

IPPNW Co-president Dr. Ime John presented on small arms and

nuclear weapons. Dr. Chris Kwaja presented on humanitarian assistance, refugees and protection of human rights in complex emergencies. Dr. Buhmann conducted four, 2-hour modules on “Globalization & Health”, “Peace through Health”, “Health & Human Rights” and “Advocacy and Dialogue.” The workshop trained 30 Nigerian medical students and doctors in training, piloted the modules, and developed written manuals on the topics. Workshop participants gave it high marks and left inspired



about how they could pass on their knowledge and skills, including in future workshops for medical students and in conflict-prone communities. The training has already been shared by an attendee who brought it to a medical student IFMSA meeting in South Africa, illustrating the power and effectiveness of such training. **VS**

PHOTO: DR. BUHMANN HAS BEEN ACTIVE IN IPPNW SINCE SHE WAS A MEDICAL STUDENT. SHE HAS BEEN A MEMBER OF THE STUDENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES SINCE 2000 AND CO-FOUNDED THE NUCLEAR WEAPONS INHERITANCE PROJECT IN 2001. DR. BUHMANN IS NOW THE IPPNW REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT FOR EUROPE.

VITAL SIGNS INTERVIEW: XANTHE HALL

Xanthe Hall is a disarmament expert and long-time anti-nuclear campaigner for IPPNW-Germany. Her views are sought and respected on topics ranging from missile defenses to a nuclear-weapons-free Europe. VS asked Xanthe about the current political landscape in Germany and about the prospects for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

VS: European NGOs are demanding that NATO take a hard look at its nuclear weapons policies as it marks its 60th anniversary. What is IPPNW-Germany contributing to this campaign?

XH: IPPNW-Germany is one of the main organizations behind the three-year campaign “our future—nuclear weapon free”—supported by 50 organizations Germany-wide—which aims to get the US nuclear weapons withdrawn from Germany by 2010. When we started this campaign, most people here did not even know that there were still nuclear weapons in Germany. We changed this by having a large demonstration and actions at the Büchel nuclear base last summer. At the 60th anniversary this week [April 3 and 4] in Strasbourg, we will run a workshop on the nuclear

weapons issue and talk about how changes in the US and UK nuclear policies might affect NATO nuclear policy, which is up for review again after the Strasbourg meeting.

VS: You just organized a successful panel on the Nuclear Weapons Convention at the Middle Powers Initiative’s Article VI Forum in Berlin. Are diplomats and government officials more receptive to the Convention than they were a year or so ago?

XH: Well, they are letting us talk about it, which they weren’t doing before. The big breakthrough was [8th Secretary General of UN] Ban Ki-Moon’s expression of support in October of last year. Now we can say



that it is one of the proposals in his five-point plan, which means it is not just some NGO initiative or attached to Malaysia and Costa Rica, but is proposed by the UN Secretary General.

VS: More than 50 German physicians signed IPPNW’s medical appeal to Presidents Obama and Medvedev. How do you account for the resurgence of interest in a world without nuclear weapons?

XH: Eighty-two European Parliamentarians have signed a statement supporting the Nuclear Weapons Convention. But the general public is still way behind on this subject. However, politically active people are beginning to see the connections and there is a great deal more networking between different movements beginning to emerge. **VS**



“In a world increasingly plagued by conflicts, which undermine health and health service delivery, it only makes sense for doctors to take an active part in brokering peace. The Peace through Health initiative shows them how.”

Agyeno Ehas Sunday
International student representative 2008-2010

SPREADING THE MESSAGE OF PREVENTION



PHOTO: AIMING FOR PREVENTION WORKSHOP AT INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF MEDICAL STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (IFMSA) CONFERENCE IN HAMMAMET, TUNISIA
IPPNW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES WENJING TAO, SWEDEN AND AGYENO EHASE SUNDAY, NIGERIA WERE INVITED TO SPEAK ON CORE IPPNW ISSUES OF PEACE, NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND SMALL ARMS VIOLENCE PREVENTION TO A WIDE AUDIENCE OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS.

USING THE ACTIVIST TOOLKIT MATERIALS AS A STARTING POINT, WENJING AND ALEXANDER UNGE, SWEDEN, GAVE PRESENTATIONS ON THE MEDICAL EFFECTS OF NUCLEAR WAR AND AGYENO GAVE A PRESENTATION, "SMALL ARMS, A GLOBAL HEALTH PROBLEM, A PUBLIC HEALTH - APPROACH." AGYENO CONDUCTED A CONDENSED TWO HOUR TRAINING ON PEACE THROUGH HEALTH BASED ON WHAT HE LEARNED AT THE TRAINING IN KANO, NIGERIA.

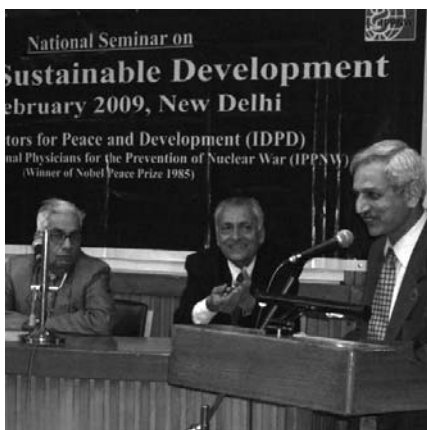


PHOTO: NATIONAL SEMINAR ON PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZED BY IPPNW'S INDIAN AFFILIATE

INDIAN DOCTORS FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT (IDPD) CALLED FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO COME FORWARD AND CAMPAIGN AGAINST A CULTURE OF VIOLENCE BECAUSE IT DIVERTS FINANCES AND RESOURCES, WHICH AFFECTS TRULY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

THE NATIONAL SEMINAR WAS ATTENDED BY DOCTORS AND MEDICAL STUDENTS FROM 14 DIFFERENT STATES IN INDIA.



PHOTO: PRESCRIPTION FOR A HEALTHY AND SECURE PLANET

STUDENT PHYSICIANS FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY'S 2009 NATIONAL CONFERENCE WAS HELD AT MOUNT SINAI MEDICAL SCHOOL IN NEW YORK IN APRIL. LEFT TO RIGHT PSR'S LACIE OLSEN, AND PSR NATIONAL STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES TOVA FULLER AND LAUREN ZAJAC ORGANIZED THE THREE DAY CONFERENCE WHICH INCLUDED KEYNOTE ADDRESSES BY PEGGY SHEPHARD OF WEAFT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE, JOSEPH CIRINCIONE, PRESIDENT OF PLOUGHSHARES FUND, AND PAUL EPSTEIN, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR HEALTH AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT AT HARVARD MEDICAL SCHOOL.

ONLINE: 2009 SPSR CONFERENCE
PSR.ORG

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IPPNW is a non - partisan federation of national medical organizations in 62 countries dedicated to safeguarding health by working to ban nuclear weapons and to address the impact of militarism and war on human health.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

IPPNW.ORG/EVENTS/UPCOMING.HTML

MAY 4 - 15, 2009

NPT

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The Preparatory Committee for the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will hold its third session at United Nations Headquarters in New York.
REACHINGCRITICALWILL.ORG

NOVEMBER 6 - 8, 2009

NGO CONFERENCE

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

The conference "Reaching nuclear disarmament - the role of civil society in strengthening the NPT" will be focusing on coordinating strategies to lead to a successful NPT Review Conference in 2010.
SLMK.ORG

AUGUST 25 - 30, 2010

IPPNW WORLD CONGRESS 2010

BASEL, SWITZERLAND

IPPNW2010.ORG

JUNE 17, 2009

\$10,000 RAFFLE DRAWING



PEACERAFFLE.ORG

ONLINE RESOURCES

IPPNW AND ONLINE SOCIAL NETWORKING

Over the last year, IPPNW has been increasing the ways in which it communicates with people from all walks of life, using new social networking tools. IPPNW is now also on:

IPPNWEUPDATE.WORDPRESS.COM

TWITTER.COM/IPPNW

FACEBOOK.COM