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Date: Fri, 14 Feb 1997 16:14:24 -0800
From: End the Arms Race <info@peacewire.org>
To: abolition-caucus@igc.org
Subject: Perspectives on Abolition

Perspectives on Abolition

During the General Assembly of Abolition 2000 in Tahiti, January 1997, The following question was posed by the author to several delegates:

What needs to be done to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons?

Ian Prior, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, New Zealand.

I think that one of the most major things that has to be done is to somehow develop the political will amongst a large proportion of ordinary people of the United States to recognize that nuclear weapons are not necessary for their security. And also to recognize that they've been deluded, and are now being deluded by those saying , "But we must have deterrence to exert out strength and to hold our place in the world as the world's superpower."

Corbin Harney, Spiritual Leader of the Western Shoshone Nations, Nevada USA.

Let's not have two heads, lets have one head. Lets think about the nuclear waste we're going to be dealing with. The United States government today, in my part of the world, is pushing the issue of getting it our of their part of the country and pushing it onto somebody else. I'm afraid it's going to happen throughout the world.

Lopeti Senituli, Pacific Concerns Resource Centre, the secretariat of the Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific Movement, Fiji.

At the moment it is quite clear that we should focus our energies on China. And on top of that, to try to ensure that those states that are suspected of accumulating not only nuclear weapons, but accumulating weapons-grade material, are prevented from succeeding. And here I would not only refer to the states of the Middle East or those in South Asia like India and Pakistan, but also to countries like Japan.

Even though the Soviet Union's Pacific presence has diminished, the slack has been taken up by China.

Peter Weiss, Chair of the Lawyer's Committee on Nuclear Policy in New York, the U.S Affiliate of International Lawyers Against Nuclear Weapons.

We need to overcome what can only be called the depraved indifference of those who make nuclear policy, who are now trying to lull the world into a totally false sense of security that there no longer is a danger - accidental or otherwise - from the still enormous nuclear stockpiles.

We need a lot of imagination and a lot of action to get through to the psyches of these people who ultimately will have to make a decision to get rid of nuclear weapons.

Myrla Baldonado, Nuclear Free Philippines, Manila.

I believe that what needs to be done to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons in the Philippines is first and foremost, for the United States to withdraw from the Asia-Pacific region. Second, for the nuclear industry to stop dumping their nuclear power plants in Asia.

Tadashi Funada, Nuclear Free Pacific Centre, Tokyo.

Theoretically we don't have any nuclear weapons, but it may be that the U.S. military brings into Japan some nuclear weapons. So I think it is very important to struggle against the U.S. military bases in Japan. To abolish nuclear weapons around Asia, it must be a struggle against U.S. bases in the region.

Gro Bagn Robinson, Psychotherapist, New York

We now have the means of knowing what makes a human being, and what the needs are - I could say the divine plan - for a human being to be up to his or her full, glorious capacity. We have neglected that for so long.

Fredrik Heffermehl, Vice President of the International Peace Bureau, Norway.

I see a very close date now which is extremely important for Abolition 2000, and that is the Preparatory Committee for the Nonproliferation Treaty Review in April in New York.

The most important help which the International Court of Justice in The Hague gave the abolition movement was this statement, which was unanimous, that there is a legally binding obligation on the part of the nuclear weapons states to enter into negotiations - and not only to start negotiations but to reach a successful result.

Danny Thompson, National Peace Council, London.

In a British context we need to reclaim the majority opinion which is that Britain should not have nuclear weapons. And then, moving onto the rest of the world, I think we've simply got to galvanize the public will into political will at the United Nations. I think that we're seeing governments slowly beginning to turn around and hopefully work together and achieve a nuclear weapons convention.

I think now we know it's achievable. Before I think we were dreaming (although there's nothing wrong with that). Now we know we can achieve it.

Istvan Farkas, Alba Circle Non-Violent Movement for Peace, Hungary.

We would like a treaty between the superpowers and states in Central Europe on a nuclear weapons-free zone. We also want to block NATO expansion and show Hungarians that it is not to their advantage to have this expansion.

Bill Davidson, Federation of American Scientists, Philadelphia.

One thing that needs to be done is to get more people focused on the problem, aware of the dangers of those states who currently have them as well as the danger of nuclear weapons spreading into more places on Earth.

How one alerts the public to that danger? I don't know. One can grasp at the health issues raised by the production of weapons, one can grasp at the problems associated with transporting radioactive wastes to raise the general level of consciousness, but that has to be constantly coupled to the need not just to solve those particular problems but to focus on the overall abolition of nuclear weapons through a treaty signed by all the countries capable of making nuclear weapons.

Interviews by

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From info@peacewire.org Sat Feb 15 08:00:21 1997

Date: Fri, 14 Feb 1997 16:14:29 -0800

From: End the Arms Race <info@peacewire.org>

To: abolition-caucus@igc.org

Subject: Tahiti Report (CANADA)

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*One Thousand Days to Nuclear Abolition:
Report on the General Assembly of Abolition 2000
January 20th to 28th, 1997, Tahiti*

by Steven Staples

Coordinator, End the Arms Race

(a founding member of the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons)

Introduction:

Abolition 2000 is a dynamic international network of peace and disarmament

organizations working together to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Activists working in the movement correctly identify themselves as abolitionists, which is a fitting term given its reference to the movement to end slavery in the United States - a struggle whose success proves that entire economic and social systems can be changed when people are committed to a vision.

Since the last General Assembly meeting in 1995, the campaign has witnessed

a series of powerful victories and encouraging events, including:

The World Courts ruling that nuclear weapons are generally illegal under international law and in particular humanitarian law, and the Courts unanimous ruling that there exists an obligation to conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament;

The Canberra Commissions report calling for nuclear abolition and outlining concrete steps that can be taken to eliminate nuclear weapons;

The creation of Nuclear Weapons Free Zones which encompass the entire Southern Hemisphere;

The successful negotiation of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which ensures the end of nuclear explosions for testing;

The joint statement by sixty generals world-wide calling for an end to nuclear arms.

However, more than 30,000 nuclear bombs remain in the world. It is clear that the nuclear weapons states are unwilling to commit themselves to nuclear abolition, and in many areas of the world nuclear weapons are still wrongly regarded as a legitimate means to ensure a nations security. With only a little more than 1000 days remaining before the year 2000, the deadline of Abolition 2000s goal of attaining an international agreement for the elimination of nuclear weapons, there is much work to be done.

Conference Organization:

The conference was jointly organized by three organizations: Abolition 2000 through the Interim Management Group, American Friends Service Committee,

and Hiti Tau, a Tahitian non-governmental organization concerned with working towards independence and on anti-nuclear issues.

Approximately eighty delegates representing approximately sixty

organizations attended the conference. Many regions of the world were represented, with the exception of South America, Australia, Africa and South Asia. I was the only delegate from Canada.

The conference was held on the beautiful island of Moorea, a short distance by ferry from Tahiti. It was hosted by Hiti Tau and the Evangelical Church of the Town of Maharepa.

Background of Abolition 2000

In April of 1995, during the first weeks of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference, activists from around the world recognized the absence of nuclear abolition on the nations agenda. About fifty organizations, later known as the Abolition Caucus, drafted and endorsed an eleven-point statement which has become the founding document of the network. The statement has since been endorsed by nearly 700 organizations world-wide.

The statement begins: A secure and livable world for our children and grandchildren and all future generations requires that we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and redress the environmental degradation and human suffering that is the legacy of fifty years of nuclear weapons testing and production.

It goes on to call on states to take steps toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, with the first step being to initiate immediately and conclude by the year 2000 negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition convention that requires the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a timebound framework, with provisions for effective verification and enforcement.

A subsequent meeting of seventy organizations was held in The Hague in November 1995 during World Court hearings on the legality of nuclear weapons. At that meeting, the group adopted the name Abolition 2000: A Global Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, and created a network of regional and working groups. While not a membership-based body, it is a network of organizations whose aim is to facilitate an exchange of information and the development of joint initiatives.

In March of 1996, Abolition 2000 held a meeting in Edinburgh. The Interim Management Group was formed at this meeting. The I.M.G. largely consists of representatives from the United States and Western Europe representing organizations such as International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, the International Peace Bureau, and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament.

Working groups established were: Nuclear Weapons Convention; Non-nuclear Security Model for Europe; Chernobyl and Nuclear Power; Media, Communication and Outreach; C.T.B.T. and Beyond; Fissile Materials; Nuclear Threats/Legal Issues; Lobbying, Dialogue and Campaigning; N.P.T. Prep Comms; and Newsletter.

Subsequently, a Global Network Office was established with Pamela Meidell of the Atomic Mirror-Earth Trust as facilitator.

It was decided at the Edinburgh meeting to hold the next meeting of the General Assembly in the Pacific region.

Pacific Issues

Behind Tahiti's facade of beaches and tourist resorts is a vibrant and well-organized anti-colonial and anti-nuclear movement. Delegates assembled

in the Pacific in order to recognize this movement and the first anniversary of the end of French nuclear testing on the nearby islands of Moruroa and Fangatafu.

Colonialism never receded from French Polynesia as it did from most parts of the world this century, and the French government maintains its authority over the islands. In 1956 de Gaulle chose French Polynesia as the next site for weapons development after Algeria had gained its independence. The use of this colony for the development of nuclear weapons – including nearly 200 test explosions – and its terrible effects of contamination, economic dependence, and authoritarian rule have devastated the region. The combination of these factors has become known as nuclear colonialism.

The Campaign for a Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific is an umbrella group

for 150 organizations from islands across the South Pacific. In this context, nuclear abolitionism is dependent upon independence, self-determination and an end to colonialism. For non-French colonies, independence struggles can take the form of creating nuclear weapons-free zones by removing U.S. military bases which allow visits by nuclear-powered and potentially nuclear-armed warships.

Although the French Government has announced an end to testing in the region, the facilities remain in place. Activists are working to ensure a complete and definitive end to nuclear testing.

Despite the end of nuclear testing, its legacy remains. The delegates heard

a woman from the Marshall Islands, a former U.S. nuclear test site, who had lost four pregnancies due to radiation exposure. As well, a former test site worker on Moruroa recounted the deaths of many co-workers, and described his

own mysterious illness which he attributes to radiation poisoning from eating contaminated fish. (He also gave an eye-witness account of fifty cm-wide fissures on Moruroa and gas escaping from underground).

Test site workers, in particular, have not had a voice in the anti-nuclear struggle. Hiti Tau and the Evangelical Church are about to release the preliminary results of the first independent health survey of former test site workers. It is hoped that all victims of exposure to radiation will receive proper medical treatment and financial compensation.

Efforts to convert the economy from military dependence have resulted in several initiatives. On the island of Moorea, delegates toured a women-controlled monoi oil operation, a cooperative pineapple beverage plant, and a vanilla plantation operated by young people.

In recognition of the Pacific issues related to nuclear abolition, the conference adopted the Moorea Declaration: Supplement to the Abolition 2000

Founding Statement. It states in part: The inalienable right to self determination, sovereignty and independence is crucial in allowing all peoples of the world to join in the common struggle to rid the planet forever of nuclear weapons.

Regional Reports

Canada (as part of North American Region):

News of Abolition 2000 work in Canada was very well received by delegates. In fact, many delegations came to the meeting with intentions of learning more about recent activities of the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and recent announcements by the Canadian Government.

In particular, delegations from the U.K. and some groups in the United States expressed a desire to hold roundtables of their own to promote support for the goals of Abolition 2000. The Japanese delegation intended to invite Doug Roche himself to hold roundtables in their country.

The report included a summary of Canadian policy on nuclear weapons, and Canadas support of its allies nuclear umbrella through delivery system testing, communication sites, nuclear warship visits, low-level flight training, and votes at the U.N. against the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

The conference was provided with a description of the Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and a synopsis of its members work since its establishment in Ottawa in April 1996:

- Creation of a Contact Group to coordinate joint efforts of the network;*
- Establishment of a communication network of an e-mail list and websites;*
- Printing of educational pamphlets and other materials;*
- Distribution of petitions calling for the Canadian Governments support for nuclear abolition;*
- A cross Canada tour by Douglas Roche holding roundtables on nuclear abolition in seventeen cities;*
- Public forums, including a tour by Rob Green to be held in May;*
- A seminar on implications of the World Courts decision on the legality of nuclear weapons to be held in March.*

Delegates were very encouraged by the way in which the Canadian government responded to our activities by holding a review of its nuclear policy. This review is the first of its kind, and peace groups in other countries have already used the announcement to further their government-lobbying efforts. The Canadian Network to Abolish Nuclear Weapons work was frequently cited as a model for abolition work in other regions.

United States:

There are a plethora of issues to be dealt with in the United States, and delegates created a substantial shopping list of areas which need attention.

However, the most urgent issue was the recently announced plan to conduct sub-critical weapons tests at the Nevada test site. These explosive tests involve detonating up to 500 lbs of conventional explosives in close proximity to weapons-grade plutonium to test new designs and to maintain the potency of existing stockpiles.

The subcritical tests are part of the \$40 billion Nuclear Stockpile Stewardship Program which will, in effect, allow U.S. weapons labs to further develop nuclear weapons.

U.S. groups plan to develop their own network through improved communication, outreach to other social movements and young people, and coordinated media and government/U.N. lobbying.

Activists intend to affix injunctions to nuclear weapons installations in light of the World Courts decision. The ruling that nuclear weapons are illegal convinced a jury in September 96 to find two activists not guilty

of criminal intent when the two felled a tower at a Navy communication centre in Wisconsin.

Asia:

Asia is perhaps the most volatile region in the world with regard to nuclear proliferation, arms races, and insecurity, with several non-aligned countries each possessing nuclear arsenals.

Shipments of highly radioactive waste, nuclear waste dumping, and the proliferation of nuclear power plants throughout the region are important issues.

Peace groups have proposed the establishment of a Northeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone between North and South Korea and Japan, which would decrease the need for the presence of U.S. nuclear weapons and bases (e.g. Okinawa). In the southern region, ten states have cooperated to create a Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone, but it has not been recognized by the nuclear powers.

Europe:

NATO expansion is a dangerous destabilizing policy for European security. NATO has recently reaffirmed its reliance upon nuclear weapons, in spite of the World Courts ruling that nuclear weapons are illegal.

While the alliance has stated that nuclear weapons will not be placed on new member states soil, the planned expansion has had the effect of practically eliminating any chance of Russian ratification of START II. As well, conventional weapons in Hungary, Poland, or the Czech Republic would be capable of destroying Russian ICBMs.

Neither Britain nor France has shown any sign of policy changes toward its reliance upon its nuclear arsenal, and in fact both are deploying new delivery systems and nuclear weapons. Activists see NATO expansion as part of a larger remilitarization of Europe.

European peace activists are working to define a non-nuclear alternative to European Security. They point to the Organization for Cooperation and Security in Europe as one possible alternative to NATO. As well, there are efforts to build support for a European Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

Middle East:

The delegate from Israel reported on the continuing campaign to free Mordechai Vanunu. Vanunu is a former nuclear technician who is currently in his 11th year of solitary confinement in an Israeli prison for revealing to the world the existence of Israel's nuclear weapons program.

Abolition work is difficult in Israel as the majority of the public support Israel's secret nuclear arsenal (and Vanunu's imprisonment). As well, efforts are being made to persuade the Israeli peace movement to confront the nuclear issue.

Internationally, an effort is needed to push governments to act consistently against weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East in a campaign to make it a nuclear weapons-free region.

Pacific:

Having achieved the creation of a South Pacific Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone, activists in the region will continue to work for independence and an end to the militarization of indigenous lands.

As well, they hope to hold the nuclear powers accountable for nuclear clean-up and compensation of radiation victims. The release of the first independent health study of test-site workers is an important part of this process.

Health Caucus and Nuclear Waste Transportation working group:

Two new working groups were added to Abolition 2000s work at the meeting:

the Health Caucus and the Nuclear Waste Transportation Working Group.

The Health Caucus is devoted to addressing issues faced by those people who are suffering ill health as a result of the development and testing of nuclear weapons. It has the specific goal of organizing a global health study to document the health effects of nuclear development. It also seeks compensation for victims of radiation poisoning.

The Nuclear Waste Transportation working group is, as its name would suggest, concerned with waste transportation, and the international trade in nuclear waste.

Countdown to the Year 2000

N.P.T. Review Prep Comm:

There is an excellent opportunity to advance Abolition 2000s goal when the nations of the world gather at the United Nations for the Preparatory Committee for the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review (N.P.T. Prep Comm). The Prep Comm will be held in New York from April 7th to 17th, 1997.

At the 1995 N.P.T. Review and Extension Conference, the nuclear weapons

states successfully applied tremendous pressure to the non-nuclear weapons states to agree to an indefinite extension.

However, the final document committed signatory states, including the nuclear weapons states, to achieving a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty before the end of the following year. The successful conclusion of the C.T.B.T. negotiation within the deadline could be used as a model and precedent for a Nuclear Weapons Convention outlining the elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework.

Nuclear Weapons Convention:

The Nuclear Weapons Convention working group of Abolition 2000 has completed a draft of a convention. Weighing in at over 110 pages, the convention is the result of study and consultation coordinated by Alyn Ware of International Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms and Jurgen Scheffran of the International Network of Engineers and Scientists.

The draft is now being reviewed by specialists, and is not yet available. It is a comprehensive document, and includes measures for dismantling weapons and verification. Interestingly, the draft convention includes a role for citizens groups in the ongoing verification process. The working group plans to have a final draft ready for the N.P.T. Prep Comm meeting in April of this year.

Structure of the Abolition 2000 network:

One goal of the conference which was not successfully achieved was answering the question of structure for the network. At present, the networks work is facilitated by the Interim Management Group; a loose grouping of individuals

from largely U.S. and European organizations.

Members of the I.M.G. wanted to create a new body, and a proposal based on a system of regional representation was put forward by the German delegation. However, there was no consensus, and the issue of creating a better defined administrative body was left to be resolved at a later time, perhaps in April when Abolition 2000 groups will gather in New York for the N.P.T. Prep. Comm.

As well, the issue of finances for the network will also need to be discussed, as the coordinator of Abolition 2000 is owed back wages and it is unlikely that all of the costs of the conference will be met through current revenues.

Achieving Abolition:

The setting of the meeting was a remote location very far from the centres of power, yet at the same time one directly affected by the horror of nuclear weapons. The farther one moves from where the decisions are made, the closer one comes to the worst effects of those decisions.

Meeting survivors of nuclear testing and learning of the tremendous struggle of those who bear the brunt of nuclearism imposed by a colonial power forces one to redouble efforts to work for abolition. It is very much a reality check for a movement which is always in danger of becoming too caught up in hypothetical arguments and diplomatic accommodation.

The Tahiti conference will be remembered for many reasons, but perhaps the longest lasting result will be an increased understanding that the movement to abolish nuclear weapons is strengthened through a diversity of

organization and strategies, and that every action for peace, whether it be at the U.N. or on a South Pacific Island, contributes to the ultimate goal.

One need only look at General George Lee Butler, a former U.S. General who once chose which cities would be the targets of nuclear weapons and now speaks for their elimination, who said recently that it was the display of the worlds condemnation of Frances resumed nuclear testing that showed him that the people are far ahead of their political leaders (NY Times 1/8/97).

The sum of the work of organizations around the world, working each in its own way, will intersect and in doing so will achieve the conditions to make the abolition of nuclear weapons possible.

*Steven Staples
Coordinator,
End the Arms Race*

I would like to thank all of those people who generously contributed to ensure that a Canadian delegate could attend the meeting. It was a privilege to represent Canada.

PEACEWIRE

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From plough@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca Sat Feb 22 17:36:52 1997
Date: Fri, 21 Feb 1997 11:44:41 -0500 (EST)
From: Project Ploughshares <plough@watserv1.uwaterloo.ca>
To: abolition-caucus@igc.apc.org
Subject: Anti-Nuclear War Fund

Announcement...

Organizations working toward nuclear weapons abolition are encouraged to apply to the Anti-Nuclear-War Fund, administered by Project Ploughshares.

The Fund provides grants for projects that advance the purpose and goal of the Fund, which is the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, worldwide.

The Fund was established in November 1990, and since then has supported more than 25 projects in 8 countries, with grants ranging from \$300 to \$10,000.

Application deadlines are March 31 and September 30. The Anti-Nuclear-War Fund committee meets twice each year, in April and October.

If you are interested in applying to the Fund, contact Nancy Regehr at Project Ploughshares for more information.

by mail: Nancy Regehr
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Conrad Grebel College
Waterloo Ontario N2L 3G6 Canada
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From aslater@igc.apc.org Mon Feb 24 16:34:32 1997
Date: Mon, 24 Feb 1997 09:23:49 -0800 (PST)
From: ALICE SLATER <aslater@igc.apc.org>
To: "Howard W. Hallman" <mupj@igc.apc.org>, Alice@igc.apc.org
Cc: pmeidell@igc.org, lcnp@aol.com, wslf@igc.org,
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panukes@igc.org
Subject: Re: NPT PreCom

At 01:53 PM 2/23/97 -0800, Howard W. Hallman wrote:

>Dear Alice:

>

>I got on e-mail and the abolition-caucus two weeks ago. I'm very impressed with the thorough NGO preparation for the NPT PreCom. Thanks to all of you for your efforts.

>

>Query: What is being done by whom to influence the positions the U.S. Government will take at the PrepCom? How can we support those efforts?

>

>With best regards,

>

>Howard W. Hallman, Chair

>Methodists United for Peace with Justice

>1500 16th Street, NW Washington, DC 20036

>phone/fax: 301 896-0013

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>

>Dear Howard,

Thanks for the compliments. The Working Group for the PrepComm is moving along. You raise an interesting question and I don't think we've addressed that issue. We've been trying to influence other governments to put pressure on the US and other nuclear powers. Aaron Tovish at Parliamentarians for Global Action just wrote to 90 parliamentarians urging them to sign the Cranston petition of the generals and to take a position at the PrepComm that negotiations should begin on a Nuclear Weapons Convention and that the Canberra recommendations should be implemented. (all in 1997) Each of the Parliamentarians received a list of the Abolition organizations in their country. We are now trying to get a letter out to the Abolition members with the names of their parliamentarians, asking them to follow-up.

As for the US, perhaps we can start a sign on letter to Clinton, with copies to Senators. Would you be interested in starting that?

How did the religious meeting leaders meeting go? Is there a report that can be posted?

On a small matter, we are running into red tape at the Methodist Building(777 UN Plaza). We can't seem to get a commitment that our Abolition 2000 Caucus can meet every day from 8:00 to 9:00 AM during the PrepComm (April 7th-11th, 14th-18th). They want to make it available to all

NGOs, not just Abolition 2000 but we do need our own room -- and at 8:00 AM that shouldn't be a big problem. Someone is making inquiries into reserving a room at the Episcopal Building on 2nd Ave. and 44th St, but I wonder if there is anything further you think we can do to obtain a contribution of a meeting room for our cause from the Methodists. People are used to meeting in that building and it would be better if they could make the early morning room available there. One requirement we have is that we would be permitted to list our name on the Board --Abolition 2000. At the present time, we are unable to list our name for the Thursday morning NPT meetings -- some kind of red tape of being open to all NGOs.

Many thanks for your help,

Warmest regards,

Alice Slater

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