



# Basel Peace Office

*Advancing international peace and security through  
the abolition of nuclear weapons*

c/o Seminar für Soziologie - Universität Basel - Petersgraben 27 - 4051 Basel, Switzerland  
[www.baselpeaceoffice.org](http://www.baselpeaceoffice.org) – Tel. +41 788 912 156 – [info@baselpeaceoffice.org](mailto:info@baselpeaceoffice.org)

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## Director's Annual Report

December 2014 – November 2015

*Alyn Ware*

### Introduction:

It has been an honour and pleasure to be part of the Basel Peace Office (BPO) and to direct its programs over the past year. This is the third year of BPO operations, and has been even more successful than the first two years. Our programs have had impact in Switzerland and globally. We organized global actions through Global Wave 2015 and UNFOLD ZERO, as well as specific events in Amman, Basel, Delhi, Geneva, Hanoi, Oslo, Helsinki, Prague, Ulaanbaatar, New York and Washington.

The President's report details a number of our activities and successes. These do not need to be repeated here. Rather I will provide a few reflections on the programs and a short report on staffing and funding issues.

### A. Programs

#### Abolition 2000

BPO is a member of Abolition 2000, the global network to eliminate nuclear weapons. We manage the website and facebook pages for Abolition 2000, and we helped organize the Abolition 2000 Annual Meeting in New York in May. Our involvement in Abolition 2000 provides a strong connection between the civil society organisations that make up the Abolition 2000 global network, and our other constituencies.

#### Climate – Nuclear Nexus

We highlighted links between climate protection and nuclear disarmament at a number of events and in the *Joint Statement of Religious Leaders, Parliamentarians and Mayors*. We organized a specific event in Geneva on *The Existential Threats of Climate Change and Nuclear Weapons – the Marshall Islands and the International Court of Justice* (hosted by the Inter Parliamentary Union). And we worked with the World Future Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of the book on this topic, which will be released in Geneva on Nov 27.

#### Framework Forum

The Framework Forum event we held in Geneva in September was very successful with 21 governments participating. The topic of the event was From the NPT Review Conference to the United Nations General Assembly, and the main focus was the proposal to re-establish a UN Open Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. This laid the groundwork for a successful UN resolution in November establishing the OEWG.

#### Global Wave 2015

BPO initiated Global Wave 2015 as an action that people could do in their own town/city/village around the world to call on governments at the 2015 NPT Review Conference to agree to commence negotiations for a nuclear weapon free world. There were over 100 creative 'waves goodbye to nuclear weapons' around the world, including one from Basel with Guy Morin, Andi Nidecker, Ueli Maeder and others. We presented the wave actions to NPT delegates through a speech to the main plenary, tweeting the wave photos/videos as delegates spoke, a wave action at the main gate of the UN and a side event. I personally led a number of the wave actions including in Geneva, Ypres, Prague (1800 steps for nuclear abolition), Hanoi and the United Nations.

Global Wave 2015 helped to build political traction at the NPT Review Conference for nuclear abolition. The Conference did not agree on a final document (due to differences over the Middle East). However, the final draft document which was mostly agreed, included the main proposal for which we were advocating – the establishment of an OEWG to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

### **Humanitarian consequences and the ATOM Project**

BPO and PNND were very active in raising the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons dimension in parliaments around the world, and in key administrations. This included organizing the parliamentary side-event for the *3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons* which was held in Vienna, where we also advanced a joint initiative for the UN to affirm the illegality of nuclear targeting of cities.

We continued to promote *the ATOM Project*, which is led by artist Karipbek Kuyukov, a second generation victim of Soviet nuclear tests, and which was launched at the 2012 PNND Assembly in Astana. We engaged Karipbek to open Global Wave 2015 ('I have no arms but I join you to wave goodbye to nuclear weapons') and as the keynote speaker at the PNND Assembly in Prague.

### **OSCE program**

This was a continuation of our program from 2014. OSCE forums and the cooperative security framework advanced by the OSCE have become increasingly important to resolve key security issues and conflicts that are preventing progress on nuclear disarmament, such as the Ukraine conflict. BPO was able to insert added value into the deliberations on these issues through our cross-party input into OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies, and our multi-stakeholder engagement. We organized successful side-events at the OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies in Vienna, Helsinki and Ulaanbaatar, and advocated successfully for nuclear disarmament language in the Helsinki Declaration (annual resolution).

### **Parliamentarians**

BPO serves as the head office for Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (PNND). We organised nuclear disarmament events and the adoption of resolutions in a range of parliaments (Austria, Belgium, European Parliament, France, Germany, Jordan, UK...) and inter parliamentary bodies. These included the Inter Parliamentary Union Assemblies in Hanoi and Geneva and OSCE Parliamentary Assemblies in Vienna and Helsinki. We also organized the 2015 PNND Assembly in Prague in conjunction with the Prague Agenda Conference (which follows-up President Obama's historic Prague speech for a nuclear-weapon-free world). The PNND Assembly was co-hosted by the Czech Senate and the Czech Foreign Ministry.

### **Religions for Peace**

I was honoured to be invited by Religions for Peace to produce a *Resource Guide on Nuclear Disarmament for Religious Leaders and Communities*. This has provided a wonderful opportunity for BPO to link our current constituents (academics, parliamentarians, mayors, diplomats and civil society actors) with religious communities. BPO launched the German edition of the publication in December last year, published with the assistance of the Protestant Reform Church. We organized joint events with Religions for Peace at the NPT Review Conference in New York and in Hiroshima on the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the nuclear bombing of the city. And we engaged religious leaders from around the world in a *Joint Statement of Mayors, Parliamentarians and Religious Leaders* which we presented to the United Nations in September.

### **Seminar fur Soziologie**

I thank Ueli Maeder and the Seminar fur Soziologie for hosting the Basel Peace Office, and secretaries Victoria Jäggi and Martha Vogel for their office support. In exchange, BPO runs a two-day field trip to Geneva for the Conflict Analysis graduate program. The field trip introduces the students to UN agencies, international organisations and NGOs working on peace, conflict resolution and disarmament globally.

### **Sports and Peace**

We promoted the *2nd UN Day of Sport for Peace and Development* by encouraging, and helping organize, sports actions which also highlighted nuclear abolition and Global Wave 2015. These included '*Hit away the Nukes*' (a youth action in Florida, USA to hit tennis balls 16,000 times representing all the nuclear weapons in the world), '*Run away the Nukes*' (a 16 Km run in Laos – one meter for every nuclear weapon in the world – to the most heavily bombed area in the Vietnam war), and *Prague Steps for Nuclear Abolition* (a run up 1,800 steps to the Prague Castle, representing the 1800 nuclear weapons on alert status).

## **UNFOLD ZERO**

UNFOLD ZERO, which BPO established in partnership with several other key international NGOs, has provided a very useful platform to promote UN initiatives for nuclear disarmament and to highlight the opportunities arising from UN bodies to facilitate nuclear disarmament. The main UNFOLD ZERO activities which we co-organized in 2015 were for the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons. This included the *Joint Statement of Legislators and Religious Leaders for a Nuclear Weapon Free World*, an *International Screening Week of 'The Man Who Saved the World'*, the UN commemoration event in Geneva, a social media action 'Don't nuke us', a video interview with the President of the UN General Assembly, and a call on leaders to *Speak up at the UN for Nuclear Abolition*.

## **Youth**

Engaging youth in peace and disarmament is an important focus of BPO. We have an internship program to give university students direct experience working with parliamentarians, diplomats at the UN and other civil society organisations. Some of our interns participated in the *Youth Summit for Nuclear Abolition* which we co-sponsored and which produced the *Youth Pledge for Nuclear Abolition*. BPO also presented to numerous universities and youth conferences. We also worked with the Youth Future Project on some events and activities, including their first documentary in Living for Change series which was filmed in Basel focusing on our work.

## **B. Finances and Staffing**

### **Finances**

Financially we have continued to have serious challenges. We were only able to raise 30% of the budget adopted at the 2014 Annual Meeting. We received no funding from the Basel Canton for this financial year. We were unsuccessful with many applications in Europe and the US. We received small grants from the Simons Foundation, EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, Quakers (New Zealand), Religions for Peace (in kind) and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (in kind). We also raised a little from a benefit event and movie screening in Basel. However, the main funding for 2015 came from two private donors from Basel.

### **Staffing and interns**

As a result of low funding, Basel Peace Office (and PNND) were not able to offer a minimum salary for myself. Without salary, I was not able to get a work permit and visa. I continue to work as a New Zealand based consultant, periodically travelling to Switzerland, USA, UK and other countries for projects. I am currently investigating the possibility of moving my consultancy to Prague (which has less restrictive regulations on income) in order to be able to stay in Europe permanently.

### **Thanks**

A note of thanks to our interns for 2015 - Simrat Swani, Rimma Velikanova, Caroline Leroy, Maria Soler Terradez, Mareike Staufenbiel, Uday Pratap Singh and Martina Crespi who provided wonderful assistance to our programs. A thank you also to Andi Nidecker and Daniela Schlettwein-Gsell for assisting with accommodation for interns.

A special thanks to Rob van Riet and Jana Jedlickova who have been actively involved in a number of the projects and co-organisers of a number of events.

And a note of deep gratitude to Andi Nidecker for being a totally hands-on President, providing guidance, support and leadership far beyond the call of duty.

Finally I would like to thank all the Board Members and partner organisations for their involvement in the program and management of the Basel Peace Office. Together we can celebrate a successful 2015 and plan for another successful year in 2016.

November 26, 2015  
Alyn Ware