



Basel Peace Office

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

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Director's Annual Report October 2013

It has been an honour and pleasure to be part of the launch of the Basel Peace Office and to direct its programs over the past year.

In the first year of our operations we have achieved a lot. We established the Basel Peace Office as a non-profit Swiss organization, launched the Basel Peace Office website in English and German, organized a number of events and program activities in Basel and in wider Switzerland and globally, and promoted these events/program activities through online media including facebook and YouTube videos.

We had success in all program areas:

Climate-nuclear nexus

We promoted the connections between nuclear abolition and climate issues in a number of ways including a presentation on this at the Basel Peace Office opening symposium, reference to this in the PNND/IPU Handbook (with special reference to the Bangladesh Parliament resolution submitted by PNND Co-President Saber Chowdhury) and the special edition of the Pacific Ecologist which I co-edited with Kay Weir, and which includes an article on the Climate-Nuclear Nexus by Rob van Riet and myself.

Engaging legislators

In partnership with PNND (headquartered in the Basel Peace Office), World Future Council and the Inter-Parliamentary Union, we:

- Produced and launched a Parliamentary Handbook to Support Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (in English, French and Spanish) which was sent to every parliament in the world and was further promoted through events at the IPU Assemblies in Quebec City, Quito and Geneva;
- Moved the IPU to make the focus of the international security work of their 162 member parliaments "Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World; The Contribution of Parliaments";
- Moved the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe to adopt (by consensus) text in their Istanbul Declaration supporting key nuclear disarmament processes including the UN Open Ended Working Group;
- Organised a range of national, regional and international parliamentary initiatives including the Global Zero Appeal (signed by 390 Members of the European Parliament), Prague Vision Letter to President Obama from NATO Parliamentarians and a Joint Parliamentary Statement Supporting a Middle East NWFZ;
- Organised the PNND Assembly in Astana, Kazakhstan – opened by the President of Kazakhstan and attended by over 100 parliamentarians from 85 countries, and another 100 disarmament experts, officials and campaigners.

Framework Forum

In conjunction with MPI we organized successful Framework Forum conferences in Berlin (hosted by the Berlin Foreign Ministry) and Geneva. These included participation of officials (mostly ambassadors) from 18-25 countries, legislators from 8-15 parliaments as well as UN officials and disarmament experts. We also assisted MPI in organizing a Framework Forum side-event in New York during the 2012 UN General Assembly. We circulated the Framework Forum briefing paper widely including to parliamentarians and to the UN Open Ended Working Group.

Humanitarian consequences and the law

This was the topic for our opening symposium on November 17, 2012. At the Humanitarian Consequences Conference in Oslo (at which about 120 countries participated), we organized a training for youth on how to engage with government officials and we organized a side-event in the Norwegian parliament. We also promoted the Oslo conference in a number of parliaments, resulting in resolutions and parliamentary questions in the Belgian, Costa Rican French, New Zealand and UK parliaments. In conjunction with PNND and the Nazarbayev Centre we launched the *ATOM Project* (Against Testing Our Mission) led by survivors of Soviet nuclear tests. We organized ATOM Project events in Basel and Geneva (opening of the exhibition in the United Nations). The ATOM Project also participated in the launch of the PNND/IPU Handbook in Quebec City.

Nuclear Abolition Forum

In conjunction with the World Future Council we researched, edited and produced the second edition of the Framework Forum academic magazine – *Moving Beyond Nuclear Deterrence to a Nuclear Weapons Free World*. The publication was launched at an event we organized with the Geneva Centre for Security Policy on 9 April 2013, and has been used at a number of academic and policy events including the Annual International Security Forum in Geneva.

Nuclear Weapon Free Zones

Basel Peace Office participated in the Helsinki Civil Society Forum for a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and other WMD, at which it was agreed that we would host the Archive of Key Documents relating to the establishment of such a zone. We have thus established and maintained this archive. I participated as expert speakers at a number of additional conferences/panels in Seoul, Copenhagen, Geneva, New York and Amman on the Middle East, North East Asia and Arctic NWFZ proposals. I contributed articles on these NWFZ proposals in a number of publications including the Nuclear Abolition Forum, Pacific Ecologist and Palestine-Israel Journal.

Sports and Peace

Basel Peace Office held a public seminar on 24 May with a number of special guests including Wilson Kipteker, world record holding sprinter and spokesperson for Peace and Sport. We also organized a 2-day workshop on 25-26 May for youth trainers on how to use games, sports and simulated exercises in conflict resolution and peace-building. We also promoted the connections between sport and peace through the Basel Peace Run and a special event on the Football Truce of 1914 featuring a speaker from the Flanders Peace Museum and the film *Joyeux Noel*.

Open Ended Working Group

The UN established an exciting new process in 2013 – the UN Open Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations – in an attempt to overcome the 17-year long deadlock in negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament. Basel Peace Office hosted the Abolition 2000 Task Force on the OEWG which was established by civil society to support the OEWG. We also launched the ‘Open the door to a nuclear weapons free world’ initiative – to build further civil society support and engagement. We participated in the OEWG sessions in Geneva in March, May, June and August. This included organizing a formal panel for the OEWG and a couple of side-events, and submitting a formal working paper (only one of two submitted by civil society and accepted by the OEWG). We produced two publications – an OEWG Manual for Governments and an OEWG Manual for Civil Society. And we launched the Open the door website www.openthedoor2013.org.

Additional initiatives for 2014

In addition to working on the above programs in 2014, we will have a couple of new initiatives.

Religions for Peace

Religions for Peace are planning on supporting us in a joint program to engage religious communities in nuclear disarmament based on the very successful resource I wrote for Religions and Peace – the Resource Guide on Nuclear Disarmament for Religious Leaders and Communities. This will include launches of other language versions of the resource, workshops at Religions for Peace Assemblies and other outreach and support to religious communities.

Youth in Action

We have applied to the European Commission for funding for a joint program with PNND, Ban All Nukes generation (BANg), Pax Christi Belgium and Prague Vision for a program to train youth in four countries (Switzerland, Belgium, Germany and the Czech Republic) on how to engage with parliamentarians and government officials in advancing nuclear disarmament. This is based on the very successful workshop we organized with BANg in Oslo in March 2013.

Finances

Financially we have had some unexpected challenges. Funding that had been expected from a number of sources – including the Basel Canton, Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, German Foreign Office, Norway Development Fund and Kazakhstan – fell through. This effected our partner organisations – in particular PNND, MPI and GSI – as well as the Basel Peace Office. We understand that the cut in funding was not a reflection on the quality of our programs but arose from other circumstances beyond our control. We are very thankful to the private donors who stepped in to assist and to swisspeace for the partnership in the OSCE program which has enabled us to continue.

Staffing

As a result of the cut in expected funds, Basel Peace Office was not able to offer a full salary for myself or to continue employing Chris (who has left us for 'greener fields'). We hope that this situation will improve in 2014. The possibility of funding for the Youth in Action and Religions for Peace initiatives increases the possibility of employing part-time program staff and possibly an assistant.

Interns

We have had some interns assisting on the webpage and on events we organized in Basel. However, employing interns has been difficult due to my travel schedule and thus no-one in the office full-time to properly supervise them.

German language

The increased demands on my time due to unexpected fundraising and program commitments have made it necessary for me to work evenings and weekends and have made it not possible for me to have any spare time to learn German. I hope that this situation will change in 2014.

Acknowledgements

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Alyn Ware