

# Declaration of Paris

**IPPNW 14<sup>th</sup> WORLD CONGRESS – “HEALTH THROUGH PEACE”  
July 2, 2000**

Physicians, fellow health workers and students from 38 countries have met in Paris at the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress of International Physicians for Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) to affirm that the survival of the world and the health of its people require the rule of peace and law within and between nations.

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of IPPNW and the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the award to IPPNW of the Nobel Prize for Peace. Early advocacy in the context of the Cold War focused on the threat of a nuclear holocaust, and called for a reversal of the nuclear arms race. Nuclear weapons abolition remains IPPNW's central concern, and we recognize that while outmoded concepts such as nuclear deterrence remain prominent in the nuclear weapons states, new assumptions, new strategies and new technologies drive the more complex threat posed by nuclear weapons today. Within IPPNW's multi-dimensional advocacy we seek to include a comprehensive and convincing vision of a world without nuclear arms

Conventional weapons, however, and principally small arms, are the major instruments of human death and injury in continuing cycles of war throughout the world. Diversion of scarce resources to bolster military strength further impoverishes poor nations, while those with greater means seek to protect their advantage in military strength, to the detriment of health programs world-wide. Increasing economic disparity and unforgiving debt policy imposed by the nations of the North fuels conflicts in the nations of the South. In response to these realities, IPPNW, through its local affiliates, has reaffirmed its global mission, and addressed the widespread effects on health of anti-personnel landmines and small arms in Africa, and mounted delegations to theatres of conflict in former Yugoslavia and Iraq.

It is within the most affluent countries that we look for example and leadership in the effort to end governance of international relations by military advantage. For this reason IPPNW has sought dialogue with decision-makers in the nuclear weapons states. The US Congress has failed to ratify nuclear conventions and the anti-personnel land mine treaty, while keeping nuclear arms on full alert and planning to test a national missile defence initiative in violation of existing ABM agreements. This gives no encouragement for any other country to engage in nuclear or conventional disarmament. The intention of IPPNW to hold its next Congress in Washington DC in May 2002 gives us opportunity to confront directly the assumptions that underlie this political inertia.

As physicians, we strive to bring positive messages that carry a promise of better health for the world. In that spirit we implemented the Hague Appeal for Peace and Justice in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. We are heartened by modern examples of that cooperation of physicians across lines of mistrust and conflict which first launched our Federation. In welcoming at Paris physicians from north and south Korea, IPPNW promises all possible support and encouragement in their endeavour to achieve the peaceful reunification of Korea.

We recognise that public assumptions and understandings are dependent on information and are readily manipulated by interests that profit or benefit from

preparations for war. The public promotion of peace calls for imaginative research and action by IPPNW, testing the impact of our core messages. While studying the health consequences of war of all kinds, we intend also to give greater attention to the root causes of war, and to strategies of early advocacy and intervention that stigmatize war as unacceptable, and seek pathways of prevention or limitation of military conflict.

Short-term gain that ignores more distant consequences is a human failing familiar to physicians who seek to promote health. If we are to stop the progressive decay of our fragile planet, the immediate advantage perceived in planning and waging war must be confronted by informed awareness of war's lasting human and environmental consequences. The task is a vital one, the road is long. Here in Paris we have found mutual encouragement and renewed strength - we will continue to build a world in peace.