

**INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS
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**NUCLEAR ENERGY TIME BOMB:
TWENTY YEARS AFTER CHERNOBYL**

Opening Remarks by Dr Ron McCoy, Co-President, IPPNW:

First of all, I would like to thank IPPNW-Germany for inviting me to this international congress and to congratulate the organizers for taking this important initiative.

We live in dangerous times. To paraphrase Albert Einstein, the splitting of the atom has changed everything except our way of thinking, and we stand on the brink of unparalleled nuclear disasters – nuclear war, nuclear terrorism, and nuclear accidents.

Sixty years ago, Hiroshima and Nagasaki taught us about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons. Twenty years ago, Chernobyl showed us the horrors of a nuclear accident. Today, we are still threatened by both nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants.

IPPNW has been advocating the abolition of nuclear weapons, since it was founded in 1980 and received the Nobel Peace Prize five years later for its work in educating leaders and the public about the threat to human survival from nuclear war.

When the Cold War ended and the world changed, IPPNW broadened its mission and agenda to include the prevention of war and the impact of economic development on the environment.

Although we know that a nuclear reactor can produce a few pounds of plutonium or highly-enriched uranium, which can be used to produce a nuclear bomb, IPPNW has not directly addressed the issue of nuclear energy for various reasons – until now.

At a time when the crisis over Iran's legitimate claim to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy could trigger another conflict in the Middle East, it is most pertinent for IPPNW to address the issue of nuclear energy, as we are doing at this conference and at the IPPNW World Congress in Helsinki this September.

There is much that Europe can do, particularly 'old Europe', to stand up to the forces of new imperialism, new militarism, and new terrorism which flows from double standards, injustice and alienation among people. Seeds of violence threaten to engulf the world in deadly conflict, and current nuclear policies increase the risk of nuclear war and nuclear terrorism.

We desperately need a breakthrough in the deadlock in nuclear disarmament. This could happen if Britain were to decide not to renew its ageing Trident nuclear arsenal, and if

NATO countries in Europe, such as Germany, were to get rid of all tactical nuclear weapons deployed on their soil.

Germany could also play an exemplary role by completing the phasing out of nuclear energy and addressing the energy equation holistically, by redefining energy in terms of energy conservation, energy efficiency, and the use of renewable sources of energy.

A dangerous nuclear age demands new thinking and new policies.