

Move the Nuclear Weapons Money - Investment for a sustainable Future (Basel, Switzerland, April 12/13 2019)

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Nuclear Winter is a known term, coined in the period of the cold war, when people considered a nuclear exchange between the Superpowers Russia and the US employing thousands of Nuclear weapons.

New models by Meteorologists now available illuminate the problem of even **a limited nuclear war** differently. We now know that even a relatively small-scale regional nuclear war - as e.g. in Kashmir - would have severe global consequences. Smoke from even a limited nuclear strike would block sunlight, and cool and dry the climate worldwide for a period up to 10 years. In the first five years, the colder, darker and drier conditions alone would see production of major grain crops drop by 15 to 40%. Over the second five years, reductions of 10 to 25% would persist. At higher latitudes, food production would essentially cease," ... In a world where many people already are hungry on a chronic basis, such a nuclear induced famine could endanger up to 2 Billion people in the Northern hemisphere. This argument of a famine potentially being provoked by even a limited nuclear war has raised the concerns for nuclear abolition by many African countries, where famine may be more prevalent than in other regions of the world.

With the possible exception of the slowly ongoing Korea peace and denuclearization process ongoing presently, disarmament is stalled; for the first time in over 30 years, there are no nuclear disarmament negotiations underway or planned. Rather than disarming, as they are legally obligated to do, all nine nuclear-armed states are investing massively, over US\$105 billion annually, not just in retaining nuclear weapons for the indefinite future, but in modernizing their weapons to make them more accurate and smaller, so called tactical nuclear weapons for use even on the battlefield, which obviously decreases the threshold of their use.

While many organisations for years have been advocating against nuclear war, my organization of the **International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW)** has reminded societies worldwide additionally of the concept of prevention, well known to physicians: prevention being the only mechanism to avoid the catastrophic event of a nuclear war, as even doctors would perish after an nuclear attack.

The World Medical Association between 1998 and 2018 has adopted and several times amended a declaration on nuclear weapons: it appeals to the duties and responsibilities of the medical profession to preserve and safeguard the health of the patient and to dedicate itself to the service of humanity. Therefore, and in light of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would have, and the impossibility of a meaningful health and humanitarian response, the WMA considers that it has a duty to work for the elimination of nuclear weapons. To achieve a world free of nuclear weapons is a necessity. As previously the ICRC, the WMA has issued a set of explicit **Recommendations re nuclear weapons**, addressing the development, stockpiling, transfer, threats and their use. It furthermore is deeply concerned on the plans to modernize nuclear weapons by all nuclear powers, requests the corresponding Govts. to honour the mentioned requests and advises them on the issue of the just mentioned nuclear famine. Finally the WMA requests national Med. Assoc. to support this declaration and also support the TPNW.

From a health perspective, physicians have plenty of arguments to advocate against nuclear weapons and continued use of nuclear power. Consider the existing some twenty previously nuclear test sites, all of them heavily contaminated and a risk for the Native local population. Also be aware of the current slow contamination of the Pacific by the destroyed nuclear power plant in Fukushima. Thousands of Gallons of water seep daily into the sea contaminating the local shores. It is also dangerous to aquatic life and humans, as Cs and other nuclides may find their way into the fish and other animals. These may later enter the food chain and affect humans. And finally think of the many radioactively contaminated existing and previous uranium mines worldwide, which very rarely are rehabilitated and remain a constant risk, when winds spread radioactive dust from tailings or this dust seeps into groundwater.

Besides demonstrating with our young generations on the streets of global cities against nuclear weapons and for a sustainable future, divestment from nuclear corporations is essential and must increasingly be considered by banks, pension funds, religious institutions and other organizations. In fact it may be equally or even more successful in the long than other more traditional measures to advocate for nuclear abolition and a sustainable future. **The medical profession should and could further strengthen a global nuclear weapons divestment campaign.**