

## **Welcome remarks to the launch of *Youth Fusion*: December 11, 2020**

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Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening, depending on where you are. It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Abolition 2000 Coordinating Committee, to the launch of *Youth Fusion*, the new campaign and action plan of the Abolition 2000 Youth Working group.

I was pleased to read in the invitation to this launch that *Youth Fusion* seeks to bring together youth working on nuclear disarmament with those working on peace, climate, disarmament of other weapons, human rights, justice, sustainable development and building back better from the pandemic; and that it organises forums and events for inter-generational dialogue, so that youth and those more experienced can listen and learn from each other and build cooperation for more effective policy action.

I was especially glad to see that last point since we're all in this together. Though by accident of birth we may have different nationalities, ethnicities, skin color or sexual and gender orientations, one common lived experience we all share is that we were all youth once.

I am proud to be a “founding mother” of the Abolition 2000 Global Network to Eliminate Nuclear Weapons, and a grandmother of the Abolition 2000 Youth Working Group. Now I guess I'm a great grandmother of *Youth Fusion*!

Abolition 2000 was founded 25 years ago during the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), when NGOs from around the world came together to draft a statement demanding governmental action on disarmament. As its number one demand, the Abolition 2000 Statement called upon all states particularly the nuclear weapons states, declared and de facto, to, “Initiate immediately and conclude by the year 2000, negotiations on a nuclear weapons abolition convention that requires the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a timebound framework, with provisions for effective verification and enforcement.”

Eventually more than 2000 organizations in 90 countries signed on. *I would note that the drafters of the statement were 25 years younger than we are now.* The Abolition 2000 Statement led to the drafting of a Model Nuclear Weapons Convention by international lawyers, scientists and activists that was circulated in 1997 by the UN Secretary-General to UN members as a guide to multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

The Model Nuclear Weapons Convention was updated in 2007 and again circulated as an official document to UN member states. There's no doubt in my mind that the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement and the Model Nuclear Weapons Convention laid the groundwork for the TPNW.

Abolition 2000 is managed by a Coordinating Committee and conducts projects and campaigns through working groups – such as the Youth Working Group - and informal sub-networks. Among our activities, we maintain a website and a database, send out newsletters and organize webinars. And we hold Annual General Meetings with representatives of our member groups, working groups, and affiliated networks including Mayors for Peace and PNND.

I believe that Abolition 2000's foundational documents and activities over the years reflect the values and aspirations expressed by *Youth Fusion*. I'd like to read from the Preamble to the Abolition 2000 Founding Statement:

“A secure and livable world for our children and grandchildren and all future generations requires that we achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and redress the environmental degradation and human suffering that is the legacy of fifty years of nuclear weapons testing and production. Further, the inextricable link between the “peaceful” and warlike uses of nuclear technologies and the threat to future generations inherent in creation and use of long-lived radioactive materials must be recognized. We must move toward reliance on clean, safe, renewable forms of energy production that do not provide the materials for weapons of mass destruction and do not poison the environment for thousands of centuries. The true “inalienable” right is not to nuclear energy, but to life, liberty and security of person in a world free of nuclear weapons.”

In 1997, Abolition 2000 held its Annual General Meeting in Moorea, French-occupied Polynesia, on the first anniversary of the last French nuclear test. Led by indigenous participants from many of the Pacific Islands, we adopted the Moorea Declaration as a supplement to our Founding Statement. It recognizes that, “Colonised and indigenous peoples have, in the large part, borne the brunt of ... nuclear devastation – from the mining of uranium and the testing of nuclear weapons on indigenous peoples land, to the dumping, storage and transport of plutonium and nuclear wastes, and the theft of land for nuclear infrastructure.” And it declares, “The inalienable right to self-determination, sovereignty and independence is crucial in allowing all peoples of the world to join in the common struggle to rid the planet forever of nuclear weapons.”

In 2001, the Abolition 2000 Global Council, meeting in the UK, adopted the Saffron Walden Declaration, which states:

“The western nuclear weapons states and their allies believe they can put a “lid” on the rising tide of discontent at the economic inequity and lack of social justice among the vast majority of the earth's people in order to maintain their access to world resources and their unsustainable levels of consumption. We assert that this dangerous and destabilising paradigm cannot endure.

We call instead for a new security framework that will serve all humanity, based on respect for international law and Treaties, conflict prevention and co-operation through a reformed United Nations. We call for immediate negotiations to abolish nuclear weapons, ban all missiles, and keep space for peace. We envisage a world that is free of nuclear weapons, free of the resultant environmental contamination, and free of social and economic injustice. We affirm our belief that this new framework is more than practical and ethical. It is imperative for our planet's future.”

I encourage you to [read the full statements](#) and learn more about more about our mission, our successes and our projects over the past 25 years on our website: [www.aboliton2000.org](http://www.aboliton2000.org)

Finally, before I hand you back to Michaela, who is Chairing this session, I'd like to invite everyone who is able to give a donation – of any size - to Abolition 2000.

[www.abolition2000.org/donate](http://www.abolition2000.org/donate)

I believe it is our responsibility to share our knowledge of the ever-present and growing dangers of nuclear war with people from all sectors. Your donations will increase our capacity to organize more events like this and build our network. Let us work together to understand the common causes of our current multi-faceted crises as we work with others to build the massive multi-generational, multi-racial, *moral fusion* movement we will need to overcome systemic violence and build a peaceful, nuclear-free, just, sustainable, and inclusive world.

Thank you for inviting me to join you today, and I look forward to working with you as we go forward together.