Welcome Address for the 19th IPPNW World Congress

Dear participants, dear colleagues, dear ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Medical Faculty of the University of Basel, I welcome you to the 19th IPPNW World Congress 2010 in Basel.

The potential global health disaster and vast environmental destruction resulting from nuclear war represent the extreme end of armed violence. You as International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) are dedicated to preventing war and advancing the understanding of the causes of armed conflict from a public health perspective.

The commitment of the IPPNW is of tremendous importance for all people, independent of nationality and place of residence, as well as for all living-beings and ecosystems on Earth. Nuclear weapons remain the greatest immediate threat to survival.

The IPPNW has initiated a variety of programs and activities to prevent war, particularly nuclear war, and to promote peace. The organization has established a network for promoting human rights programs, such as those supporting refugees and child welfare. These programs aim to further health and provide counselling for the suffering, particularly children, the most innocent and vulnerable victims of war. Networking, communication, education, advocacy activities on environmental issues such as medical waste and persistent organic pollutants, human rights initiatives, meetings with politicians, and various workshops are just a small part of the current activities that work towards the ultimate goal of nuclear abolition.

I encourage you to use your time in Basel to learn from each other and to discuss the direction of national and international work for the prevention of nuclear war and to collectively initiate and promote new projects to reach this goal as effectively as possible. I thank the organizers for inviting you to Basel, and each of you for being part of the IPPNW and for your personal time, motivation, and contribution to make the world a better and more peaceful place.

Welcome to Basel, and thank you for attending.

Albert Urwyler, MD
Dean of the Medical Faculty
University of Basel

– Basel, 25 August 2010 –
Words of Greeting for the 19th IPPNW World Congress

The discussion about nuclear weapons - and the possibility of using them - cannot be a political, but only a humanitarian one. The final question is, whether mankind wants to survive. Physicians usually claim for themselves to protect life and relieve human suffering. In politics priorities are set differently: Power and its preservation, struggle of political groups, nations and community of nations for the resources of our world, attempts to spread their own ideologies all over the planet, even against one's better judgment. Politics and politicians will therefore never be able to solve the problems of nuclear weapons and associated risks on their own. Only constant pressure will - if at all - force politics to find new solutions for old problems. The struggle for a future without nuclear weapons will be lengthy and frustrating. Endurance will be of more importance than short-term enthusiasm. As future physicians you have to assume responsibility. You must act pragmatically and free of ideologies before it is too late. And be aware that politics is a patient that needs a lifelong therapy and therapeutic success is rather rare. I pin all my hopes on you. May all your efforts for a better future be successful!

Prof. Peter Eggli, Dean
Medical Faculty
University of Bern

– Basel, 25 August 2010 –
Words of Greeting for the 19\textsuperscript{th} IPPNW World Congress

Dear congress participants, dear colleagues, dear ladies and gentlemen,

Political constellations have changed over the decades in which nuclear weapons have become a reality endangering the world’s population – debates between different political systems have partially shifted. The arsenals of nuclear weapons states fluctuate accordingly, while other nations strive for their own nuclear weapons. But the danger towards mankind emanating from nuclear weapons remains unchanged.

IPPNW’s objective is the prevention of a nuclear war. This task is of utmost interest to everyone and its goal is a world free of nuclear weapons. Prevention work is from experience multilayered and modifications can only be achieved by repeated and constant effort. I encourage you empathically to keep up your work in the interest of us all and I hope that the 19\textsuperscript{th} IPPNW World Congress takes us a step closer to a future rid of nuclear weapons.

Prof. Klaus W. Grätz, Dean
Medical Faculty of the University of Zurich

– Basel, 25 August 2010 –
Medicine: Not just a matter of technology

Medicine isn't only a matter of technology. Any invention is only worth using if its cost/benefit ratio has been duly evaluated. Medicine has a social responsibility towards every patient, every citizen.

Today, thirty years after it was founded, IPPNW's primary concern, regarding the catastrophic consequences of a nuclear conflict, remains as current as ever. As the Dean of the faculty of biology and medicine of the University of Lausanne, I firmly support this cause and would like to wish many productive exchanges to all participants of this 19th world congress.

Patrick Francioli
Dean of the faculty of biology and medicine of the University of Lausanne