



Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee

information

NFLA Media release - for immediate release, 14th April 2013

NFLA Scotland holds important joint seminar on future trends in the nuclear weapons debate – former Mayor of Hiroshima, former New Zealand Arms Control Minister, and Bill Kidd MSP amongst the speakers

The Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA) Scotland Forum is holding a high-profile joint seminar on the issue of nuclear weapons proliferation in Edinburgh City Chambers this Friday, April 19th. (1)

The seminar coincides with the Abolition 2000 Annual General Meeting (taking place in St Columba's-by-the-Castle Church on 17th and 18th April) (2). The seminar has been organised in co-operation between the NFLA, Abolition 2000, Mayors for Peace (3) and Parliamentarians for Non-proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament (PNND). (4)

With major concerns over North Korea's nuclear weapons capability, and ongoing discussions with Iran over its nuclear programme, as well as the forthcoming Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty Preparatory Conference taking place in Geneva from the 22nd April, this timely seminar will consider what the prospects are for reducing nuclear weapons proliferation in the world this year. It will also highlight the necessity of building an effective coalition of support for the reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons across the world.

The issue is of paramount importance in Scotland, where it is regularly discussed in reference to the 2014 Scottish independence referendum and the 2015 decision (to be made after the next UK general election) on whether the Trident nuclear weapon system is to be replaced.

The high profile speakers at this seminar include:

- Dr Tadatoshi Akiba, former Mayor of Hiroshima and the former President of the 5,587 member Mayors for Peace organisation. Dr Akiba is the recipient of a number of prominent international peace awards and is the current chair of the influential Middle Powers Initiative.
- Matt Robson, a former New Zealand Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control and currently the Co-ordinator of the PNND South East Asia Region.
- Laurie Ross, the Director of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone and Peacemaking Association.
- Bill Kidd MSP, Co-chair of the Scottish Parliament's Cross-party Group on Nuclear Weapons and Co-President of PNND.

NFLA Scotland Convenor-elect, Councillor Bill Butler said:

"I am delighted that the NFLA has been able to work so closely with Abolition 2000, PNND and Mayors for Peace to put together this seminar on nuclear weapons proliferation, with such a panel of high profile and expert speakers. By working together with such groups and on a cross-party political level NFLA will be much stronger in achieving its aim of a nuclear weapons free world. If we do not resolve this matter swiftly we are going to see more incidents like we are currently experiencing with North Korea. We have to start a timetabled reduction in existing nuclear weapon arsenals and look to cancel the planned upgrade of Trident, where a majority in Scotland and across the UK oppose such an expensive and outdated weapons system. I look forward to meeting the panel speakers and the members of other groups who share our aims and objectives for a nuclear free world."

Panel speaker and PNND Co-President Bill Kidd MSP added:

"The debate over nuclear weapons in Scotland shows a cross-party and wide public support for their removal from the country and a move away from possessing such weapons of mass destruction. I am

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT VOICE ON NUCLEAR ISSUES



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delighted Abolition 2000 decided to hold its 2013 International AGM in Scotland and that NFLA Scotland have worked with it, Mayors for Peace and PNND to bring the issues around nuclear weapons to a wider local government and NGO audience. Only by working together can we jointly persuade nuclear weapons states to join with the vast majority of countries in the United Nations by becoming nuclear free. I look forward to speaking at the seminar and listening to the other panellists and the audience.”

Ends

Further information - Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary - 0161 234 3244 or 07771 930196.

Notes to editors:

- (1) Nuclear Free Local Authorities Scotland Forum Spring 2013 Seminar (with Abolition 2000, Mayors for Peace and PNND):
**2013 – Why is it a pivotal year for the international campaign to ban nuclear weapons?
And how do we build up a coalition to work together for a nuclear weapons free world?**
Business Centre, Edinburgh City Chambers, April 19th 2013, 10.30am – 12.30pm

FINAL PROGRAMME

- 10.00am **Registration**
- 10.30am **Welcome:** Lord Provost of Edinburgh, Donald Wilson and NFLA Scotland Convenor-Elect, Councillor Bill Butler
- 10.35am **Tadatoshi Akiba**, Former Mayor of Hiroshima and Chair of Middle Powers Initiative
- 11.00am **Laurie Ross**, Director of the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone & Peacemaking Association
- 11.25pm **Matt Robson**, Former New Zealand Minister for Disarmament & Arms Control / PNND SE Asia Co-ordinator
- 11.50am **Bill Kidd MSP**, Co-Chair of the Scottish Parliament's Cross Party Group on Nuclear Weapons and PNND Co-President
- 12.15pm **Panel discussion and Q & A session (for 12.45pm conclusion)**

- (2) Abolition 2000 Registration details for 2013 AGM in Edinburgh <http://www.abolition2000.org>
(3) Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign <http://2020visioncampaign.org>
(4) Parliamentarians for Non-proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament <http://www.pnnd.org>

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