

***Women's International League for Peace and Freedom***  
***Ligue internationale des femmes pour la paix et la liberté***  
***Liga Internacional de Mujeres por la Paz y la Libertad***  
***Internationale Frauenliga für Frieden und Freiheit***

**Consultative Status with United Nations ECOSOC, UNCTAD and UNESCO**

**Special Consultative Relations with FAO, ILO and UNICEF**  
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17th June 2008

Hon Kevin Rudd MP, Prime Minister  
PO Box 6022  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Rudd

We write to congratulate you most warmly on your recent announcement at Kyoto University concerning the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, following your historic visit to Hiroshima.

We very much welcome the establishment of this new commission, which we understand is a joint endeavour with the Government of Japan. Thank you for returning Australia to a leadership role in international efforts to achieve the twin goals of nuclear non-proliferation and complete and universal nuclear disarmament. We also welcome the appointment of former Foreign Affairs Minister and current President of International Crisis Group, Gareth Evans, as one of the Commission's co-chairs.

While we have no doubt that a distinguished panel of commissioners will be appointed, we wish to take this opportunity to urge with the utmost respect that distinguished women (of whom there are many) should not be overlooked as potential candidates for the post of commissioners.

It is our hope that both the Australian and Japanese governments will be able to be generous in ensuring that the Commission is adequately resourced in order to allow it to accomplish its important work through consulting with experts in the non-governmental community, as well as facilitating information and awareness-raising on nuclear dangers and solutions through public education and media events. In view of the recent cuts to DFAT's budget, we anticipate that Secretariat support for the new commission will be additional to the existing budgetary allocation for DFAT.

In view of the pressure under which the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty has struggled since the fiasco of the last Review Conference in 2005, we agree that the establishment of the new commission is indeed timely. WILPF has worked against the scourge of nuclear weapons since they were invented; ours is the only non-governmental organisation that has attended every single Review Conference and PrepCom of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Our ReachingCriticalWill.org project supports the engagement and participation of NGOs in nuclear disarmament negotiating fora, and our summaries and website which places all speeches and draft

resolutions and working papers online from the NPT, the CD and the GA First Committee is widely used by diplomats and Foreign Ministries around the world.

In the years since the 2005 RevCon and prior to the NPT Preparatory Committee meetings in Vienna 2007 and Geneva 2008, our organisation has been pleased to participate in NGO meetings with the Department of Foreign Affairs where we have put forward our views on ways to progress the nuclear agenda. We have repeated on these occasions our support for the idea outlined by governments in numerous multilateral fora and through agreed documents, that an important step towards nuclear disarmament is the reduced role for nuclear weapons in security policies. Australia has a role to play in showing how a country can remove nuclear weapons from security policies by denuclearising the US alliance, respectfully indicating that we no longer require the US nuclear umbrella as part of our security arrangements.

Since our ally, the United States of America still holds the world's most powerful arsenal of nuclear and conventional weaponry, it is patently obvious that the US must be brought on board for any disarmament and non-proliferation effort to succeed. Fortunately, at this time a window of opportunity presents itself when both US Presidential candidates, Barack Obama and John McCain, have expressed a willingness to reassess rigidities of nuclear doctrines in the US, with Obama placing nuclear abolition on the election agenda for the first time ever.

In March this year, we wrote to Foreign Minister, Stephen Smith reminding the Minister that we, like many Australians, had accepted the ALP's pre-election statements of "serious concerns" on US Missile Defence as having been made in good faith. Like many Australians, we view the US Missile Defence system as being the greatest single obstacle to progress towards nuclear disarmament. With NMD, the balance of nuclear power can no longer operate as a deterrent where one side has the capacity for first-strike, a capacity which NMD delivers to the US. If we are to accept that your efforts to further the nuclear disarmament agenda through the establishment of the new commission are now made in good faith, we will expect that under your Government, Australia will not become involved in any aspect of US Missile Defence. Once more, we call on you and the Foreign Minister to use your good offices with the United States to urge the cessation of all research and development on NMD.

In view of the various efforts and initiatives in the direction of the elimination of nuclear weapons, it is our hope that the new commission may be able to bring together the promise of much of the earlier work - the work of the Canberra Commission, the Blix Commission on WMD and the more recent initiative of Henry Kissinger, Sam Nunn, George Schultz and William Perry - in order to remove the logjams in the CD and the NPT Conferences to build the momentum necessary to end the stalemate which has threatened progress on the nuclear agenda especially since the NPT RevCon of 2005.

Once more we warmly congratulate you on initiating the new commission and look forward to working further with the Australian Government on these matters.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Picone and Ruth Russell  
Joint National Coordinators

CC.: Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon Stephen Smith MP