



Geneva NGO Committee for Disarmament Report to the CONGO Board, 10 Feb. 09

The Geneva NGO Committee for Disarmament has not been extremely active, as a committee in 2008, but each of the member organisations has done a lot to further the cause of peace and disarmament.

The Committee did organise a few significant events in 2008, including:

International Women’s Day Disarmament Seminar

With the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Geneva Forum, Geneva NGO Committee on the Status of Women Working Group on Peace a highly successful International Women’s Day Disarmament Seminar: *At What Cost?: Women, Wars, Weapons and Conflict Prevention*. The seminar was an opportunity for over one hundred women from more than forty countries to share information in a series of briefings, discussions and strategising on gender and military budgets, landmines, small arms, nuclear weapons and security policy. The seminar report is available from the WILPF secretariat (Inforequest@wilpf.ch) or online at: <http://www.wilpf.int.ch/events/2008IWD/index.html>.

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee Meeting

This meeting (PrepCom) took place in Geneva 28 April – 9 May 2008. During the PrepCom the Committee organised a welcome and orientation session for NGOs not based in Geneva. In addition, the President of the Committee delivered remarks at the opening reception for the exhibition in the Salle des Pas Perdus (in the Palais des Nations) entitled: “From a Culture of Violence to a Culture of Peace: Transforming the Human Spirit”. The Committee also provided logistical support for the Annual General Meeting of the Abolition 2000 Network and more.

Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters

Every year the Committee is requested to nominate two NGO speakers to address the UN Secretary General’s Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters, on issues directly related to their agenda. In 2008, the Committee supported two NGO speakers to address the Advisory Board: Xanthe Hall and Jurgen Altmann who addressed the issues of energy security and environment in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation; the 'Hoover Plan' for nuclear disarmament: Multilateralism and the UN dimension, and; emerging weapons technologies, including outer space aspects and nano-technology.

Ongoing interaction with Disarmament Delegates

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The Committee members meet regularly with disarmament Ambassadors based in Geneva. In late 2008, these meetings focused on increasing NGO engagement and interaction with the Conference on Disarmament and building on the global momentum for nuclear abolition.

Looking Ahead- 2009 and beyond

Membership Renewal

Recognizing that diverse tactics and strategies are needed to achieve sustainable, verifiable disarmament, the Committee is comprised of members not all of whom have representation in Geneva. In the first quarter of 2009 renewal letters will be sent to current Committee members (spanning from Gensuikyo in Japan to Mouvement de la Paix in France) encouraging them to renew their membership and asking them to suggest additional organisations who might be interested in joining.

Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty Preparatory Committee Meeting

While the 2009 PrepCom will be taking place in New York, Committee members are currently engaged in discussions on the NGO presentations and in organising side events and other activities during the PrepCom.

Welcome Luncheon for UNIDIR Director

The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has recently engaged a new Director- Ms. Theresa Hitchens. The Committee is planning a welcome luncheon for Ms. Hitchens, and her Deputy Director Ms. Christiane Agbotan Johnson, to introduce them to the Geneva NGO disarmament community and have an informal discussion on issues of concern to Geneva disarmament advocates.

Conference on Disarmament

The Committee continues to engage with disarmament Ambassadors at the Conference on Disarmament with an eye to encouraging greater NGO participation in that body. Recognizing that the only substantive movement on disarmament issues has come from bodies who engage consistently with NGOs, the committee will continue to advocate for greater access and substantive engagement. There has been discussion in the plenary sessions of the CD already in 2009 on increasing the role of NGOs, and there may be an opportunity to see a revision to the 2004 Rules of Procedure¹ regarding NGO participation.

¹ <http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/political/cd/basicinfo/CDRules.pdf>



COMMITTEE REPORT
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The Committee relies on the strength of its members and the activities of the committee members reflect strongly on the committee as a whole- we are greater than the sum of our parts.

The coming year is filled with cautious optimism in the field of disarmament. We are hopeful, while recognizing that there is still a lot of work to do.

Submitted by Susi Snyder, President Geneva NGO Committee for Disarmament

11 February 2009

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