



Via e-mail: pm@pm.gc.ca

May 10, 2010

The Right Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON
K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister:

Twenty years after the end of the Cold War there are more than 23,000 nuclear weapons still in existence, with a combined blast capacity equivalent to 150,000 Hiroshima bombs.

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) expresses its support for a nuclear weapon-free world. In 2009, the board of CNA approved a position statement noting governments' responsibility to respect international law and engage in international disarmament efforts – particularly the elimination of nuclear weapons.

We commend your government for its important recent announcement coming out of the Nuclear Security Summit that took place in Washington, D.C., in which Canada will eliminate its stockpiles of highly enriched uranium in an effort to curb the proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, we call on the government of Canada to work actively in support of nuclear disarmament toward the elimination of these weapons.

Political opinion of world leaders increasingly supports the creation of a legal framework to ban nuclear weapons. A nuclear weapons convention is being called for by the United Nations (UN) Secretary General and a growing number of heads of state. In 2009, the UN General Assembly overwhelmingly adopted a resolution to this effect. As well, the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons presents an opportunity for the 189 states parties to commit to preparatory work on the concepts for a legal framework. The time is right to begin talks on the complex issue of ridding the world of nuclear weapons.

As nurses, we know there is no medical response in the event of a nuclear explosion because health-care infrastructure and personnel, water, sanitation and electricity would all be destroyed or severely damaged.

Canada has a responsibility, as part of the global community, to work for a world of peace and true security without nuclear weapons, and we encourage you to make a commitment to that process.

Sincerely,

Kaaren Neufeld RN, MN
President

Cc. Honourable Lawrence Cannon, Minister of Foreign Affairs