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Anti-nuclear in Japan

Major anti-nuclear conference in Japan calls international day of action

- News from around the world -

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On January 14-15 2012 more than 10,000 participants from more than 30 countries attended a Global conference for a nuclear free world in Yokohama, Japan. More than 100 guest speakers addressed the conference which included those who had witnessed the disaster of Chernobyl in 1986 and the US nuclear test site on Marshall Islands as well as Fukushima. Attendance from other Asian countries was particularly noticeable but it also included a significant number of European and Australian visitors.

The opening session was addressed by Yuri Tomitsuka, a 10-year-old boy who was evacuated from Fukushima district after the disaster of March 11 2011 when a meltdown took place at the nuclear plant there following a tsunami. He said, "I want to ask politicians which is more important. Is it money or our lives? I don't want to get ill. Nuclear plants are not necessary for children."

The conference made a strong link between nuclear power and nuclear weapons "what the final declaration calls the "nuclear fuel chain". If you are caught in a nuclear accident it is no consolation to know that the plant was built for "peaceful" reasons! It also drew out the secretiveness of the nuclear industry and the implication of this for civil liberties. The final declaration of the conference also called for a Global Day of Action on March 11 2012 "the anniversary of Fukushima" [http://npfree.jp/download/yokohama ...](http://npfree.jp/download/yokohama...)

But no sooner had the conference closed than the Japanese government yet again showed its determination to ignore the demands of the anti-nuclear movement at home and internationally. On January 17 they made a proposal, still to be agreed by the Parliament, that in future nuclear power plants will be able to apply for a further 20 year extension to their existing 40 year licences. It is clear that the government is more receptive to lobbying from the nuclear power industry than to the demands of its own people.

Japanese activists are also concerned that there is increasing pressure to restart a number of reactors shut down in the aftermath of Fukushima despite strong local opposition. International pressure will continue to be important to support activists on the ground in their resistance.