



IndependentWHO – Health and Nuclear Power

PRESS RELEASE

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Scientific and Citizen Forum on the Genetic Effects of Ionizing Radiation *29 November 2014, Geneva (Switzerland)*

The Collective IndependentWHO – Health and Nuclear Power (IWHO) is organizing a public Scientific and Citizen Forum on the Genetic Effects of Ionizing Radiation at the Ecumenical Centre, 120 route de Ferney, Geneva (Switzerland) on Saturday 29 November 2014.

The Forum brings together experts from Germany, Japan, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States of America to discuss the effects of radiation on generations of human beings, plants and animals affected by all sources of radioactive pollution. These include routine functioning of nuclear power plants, major accidents such as those at Chernobyl and Fukushima, atmospheric and below ground nuclear tests and the use of depleted uranium in weapons.

The speakers are **Dr Inge Schmitz-Feuerhake**, retired professor in experimental physics at the University of Bremen (Germany); **Dr Yuri Dubrova**, professor of genetics at the University of Leicester (UK); **Dr Wladimir Wertelecki**, President of the Board of the OMNI-Net Ukraine Child Development Programmes and retired Chair of the Department of Medical Genetics and Birth Defects, University of South Alabama (USA); **Dr Keith Baverstock**, docent in the Faculty of Natural and Environmental Sciences of the University of Kuopio, Finland; **Dr Timothy Mousseau**, professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of South Carolina (USA); **Chiyo Nohara**, team-member, BCPH Unit of Molecular Physiology, Department of Chemistry, Biology and Marine Science, Faculty of Science at the University of the Ryukyus in Okinawa (Japan). The forum will be moderated by **Ruth Stégassy**, presenter of the programme *Terre à Terre* on Radio France Culture. (For full programme see www.independentwho.org)

The World Health Organization declared in 1957 that ***“all man-made radiation must be regarded as harmful to man from the genetic point of view”*** and that ***“the well-being of descendants of the present generation is threatened by developments in the use of nuclear energy and of sources of radiation”***. No scientific evidence has emerged since then to contradict this position. On the contrary subsequent studies indicate that the dangers have been underestimated. Half a century on, the earth is bathed in radioactive contamination. Nuclear activities, industrial and military, have **damaged the life support system** of humanity and all other life forms for tens of thousands of years **and their genetic inheritance, irrevocably**. Meanwhile, and despite its early, strongly-worded caution in relation to genetic effects, the **WHO, has abdicated its responsibilities** in all aspects of radioprotection. It is subordinate to the nuclear establishment as are the national health authorities of its Member States. To fill this void, **independent scientists and concerned citizens must join forces** to examine the evidence, increase public knowledge, and take action to halt further damage and **ensure the future protection of our precious genetic heritage**.

The Forum will cover: immediate and delayed genetic effects of ionizing radiation; evidence from past and present studies, biological consequences for individuals, populations and ecosystems; congenital malformations in infants in Ukraine, recent evidence of genetic effects in butterflies in Fukushima, and the role and consequences of genomic instability induced by environmental stressors. **Special emphasis is placed on public understanding** of the basics of long term, genetic damage resulting from widespread massive radiocontamination, through question and answer sessions with presenters and on the **action that scientists and citizens can take together in the interests of responsible and democratic decision making in this critical area of public health**.

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