# Introduction from Abolition 2000

Dear anti-nuclear friends and colleagues

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all, on behalf of the Coordinating Committee of Abolition 2000, to the launch of “Youth Fusion”, the new name for the Abolition 2000 Youth Group.

As someone in their early 50s, I cannot tell you how pleased I am to see it when young people appear with the drive, motivation and energy to take the baton from the older generation in the struggle to push for meaningful change.

Philosophers such as Marx have said that the motor of history is the struggle between classes and one could certainly make that argument today if we redefine the upper class as the elite 1% of society that controls the same amount of wealth as the bottom 99%. However, others such as the Spaniard José Ortega y Gasset have proposed that the true driver of history is the struggle between generations, and I think it’s interesting to reflect on this idea in the context of this launch of Youth Fusion.

Every generation has its different social and cultural landscape into which it was born. The landscape of the generation born in the late 1930s was characterised by the horror of totalitarianism and war. The following generation was born into a hopeful post-war landscape, rebuilding both nations and societies. The generation of the 70s and 80s is marked by growing globalisation and the fear of nuclear holocaust which ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall. The subsequent generation is marked by increasingly sophisticated technology and the appearance of the internet and the current generation is marked by growing environmental concerns and fear for the survival of the planet.

These landscapes into which human beings are born mark our beliefs and our values, and it is this difference in beliefs and values which is at the source of this generational struggle. The beliefs and values of the current generation in power are different to those of the generation that is fighting to come into power. When power passes from one generation to the next change can be rapid. This is clearly illustrated by the way that moves to legalise same-sex marriage are appearing all over the world.

It is obvious to anyone who pays any attention that the entire social and cultural landscape of today is unfit for purpose—if that purpose is to provide a dignified life for human beings in harmony with the natural environment. The economic system doesn’t work, military spending is at stratospheric levels, the planet is unable to cope with pandemics, women struggle for their rights even in the most progressive societies, the United Nations needs refounding in order to eliminate the hegemony of the nuclear powers, traditional views of gender and sexuality are being questioned, biodiversity is being destroyed, and of course, we are watching an environmental and climate catastrophe unfolding in real-time before our very eyes.

This is increasingly clear to the youth of today and has led to the appearance of a new sensibility among young people, and this, coupled with the interconnectedness of the world through technology, allows for events like this one to occur. This sensibility is characterised by acceptance of difference, of concern for the planet, of unquestioned equality of all human beings, and I hope, a tendency towards seeking nonviolent resolutions to conflicts.

We are so proud that the young people in our webinar represent this new sensibility and have the motivation to fight for the one aspect of a better world that most concerns Abolition 2000, namely the elimination of nuclear weapons and nuclear energy, but we also know that we cannot treat “youth” as one, monolithic block of thought and opinion. There will be even young people out there who can be persuaded of the benefit of nuclear weapons. The tendency of the generation in power is to hold a patronising regard towards youth, thus it is important in Abolition 2000 to have spaces in which young people can work on shaping the image of the world they want to live in and for us “in power” to ensure that their voices are heard in all areas of our activity. And in return, it is great to see that Youth Fusion are taking seriously the topic of intergenerational dialogue because although the landscapes of our birth are different, we in the older generation surely have learned a thing or two over the years that can be helpful.

So, without further ado, I will hand you over to Vanda who is facilitating this presentation, but before that I’d like to invite everyone who can to give a donation to Abolition 2000.

[www.abolition2000.org/donate](http://www.abolition2000.org/donate)

With your donations we will have more capacity to organise more events such as these and build our network and reach out to people struggling in different fields of human progress, because it is in our convergence that we will find our strength and create the new paradigms for a society in which nuclear weapons are not only obsolete but also consigned to the dustbin of human prehistory.

Many thanks and enjoy the presentation.