

ICAN launches Million Pleas appeal on anniversary of Hiroshima bombing

MELBOURNE – People are being urged to help create the world’s longest video chain letter to appeal to world leaders to abolish nuclear weapons. The unique grassroots “Million Pleas” campaign, initiated in Australia, is being launched to mark the 65th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima.

Organisers want to give millions of people around the world the chance to voice their support for nuclear disarmament by uploading their image and personal plea at www.millionpleas.com. Ambassadors of the campaign include South Africa’s Nobel Peace laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Jody Williams and Australian former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser.

Archbishop Tutu urged people to help bring an end to the nuclear threat that has hung over the world now for three generations, saying: “You can build the groundswell of support for a nuclear abolition treaty right from your home or school by adding your voice now to the world’s largest video chain message to leaders. Sixty-five years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It’s time we retired nuclear weapons.”

Nobel Peace Prize winner Jody Williams joined calls for action through www.millionpleas.com: “No matter where you are, no matter what you do – whether you live in a nuclear-armed nation or not – I urge you to upload your plea today at www.millionpleas.com. Your voice can make an enormous difference.”

The campaign is a partnership between the International Campaign Against Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and Melbourne advertising agency Whybin TBWA. It features a special promotion filmed in Hiroshima – where the world’s first nuclear bomb was dropped on 6 August 1945, killing up to 100,000 people. Tens of thousands more were killed when a second bomb was dropped on Nagasaki just three days later.

The 45-second film features a group of Hiroshima school children and Nakanishi Iwao, an 80-year-old survivor of the blast, calling on the world’s nuclear powers to ensure no other city on earth ever faces such devastation. “It’s an incredibly moving message,” said ICAN spokesperson Dr Bill Williams. “Banning nuclear weapons would be the ultimate mark of respect to those who died at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”