



## NUCLEAR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SERVICE

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## NEWS FROM NIRS

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### **NIRS to Report on Impact of Radiation on Girls and Women at International Nuclear Weapons Conference**

Takoma Park, Maryland, USA—On the heels of a *Los Angeles Times* report on calls for the United States to resume making and testing nuclear weapons, a US-based radiation expert and anti-nuclear activist will present research on the hazards of radiation exposure at a global conference in Vienna, Austria. Mary Olson of Asheville, NC, a nuclear waste specialist with Nuclear Information and Resource Service (NIRS), has been invited to speak at the 3rd international conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

The conference will take place December 8 and 9, 2014 at the Hofburg Palace in Vienna. More than 100 country delegations are expected to attend. The event is intended as the opening of the 2015 review session of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that will culminate in May 2015 at the United Nations. Information about the conference can be found at the links below.

Olson will be the first speaker after the opening ceremonies. Olson will present her findings that children, particularly girls, are most at risk of cancer from radiation exposure, based on the US National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Biological Effects of Ionizing Radiation VII (BEIR VII). The BEIR VII findings demonstrate that survivors of the atomic bombings in 1945 at Hiroshima and Nagasaki who were below the age of 5 not only had the highest risk of getting cancer at some point in their lives, but that girls were twice as likely to get cancer as were boys.

The NAS data also shows that gender played a factor in cancer fatalities among survivors who were adults at the time of bombing; for every 2 men who died of cancer, three women died. Olson will also provide a baseline introduction to the medical consequences of using nuclear weapons.

“I am honored to be invited by the government of Austria to speak to the nations who will gather to

work towards global nuclear disarmament. I am especially excited to be there as an educator, speaking to a new generation of policy analysts and diplomats. For people who came after the Cold War, much of what I have to say will be news. Disproportionate impact of radiation on females is news to everyone.”

NIRS’ findings on gender were published by Olson in 2011 in the NIRS Briefing Paper “Atomic Radiation is More Harmful to Women” (link below). This is the first major address on the topic for NIRS, and will reach an audience of government representatives from over 100 participating nations, as well as international organizations, academia, civil society and other experts.

Olson’s analysis is independent, but was preceded by the Institute for Energy and Environmental Research (IEER), which launched the “Healthy from the Start” campaign in 2006, focused on revising radiation standards to protect the most vulnerable (link below).

In addition, Olson will attend the Civil Society Forum of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons also in Vienna the weekend before the country delegations gather for the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons. From the conference webpage:

“With this conference, Austria wishes to strengthen the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to contribute to the growing momentum to firmly anchor the humanitarian imperative in all global efforts dealing with nuclear weapons and nuclear disarmament.”

This event is intended as the opening of the 2015 review session of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that will climax in May 2015 at the United Nations.

**Vienna Conference webpage:**

<http://www.bmeia.gv.at/en/european-foreign-policy/disarmament/weapons-of-mass-destruction/nuclear-weapons-and-nuclear-terrorism/vienna-conference-on-the-humanitarian-impact-of-nuclear-weapons/>

**Vienna conference program:**

[http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14vienna-Program.pdf](http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14vienna-Program.pdf)

**Abstracts and Bios for presenters, including Mary Olson:**

[http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14\\_Abstracts\\_and\\_Speaker\\_Biographies.pdf](http://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Abruestung/HINW14_Abstracts_and_Speaker_Biographies.pdf)

**NIRS report: “Atomic Radiation is More Harmful to Women”**

<http://www.nirs.org/radiation/radhealth/radiationwomen.pdf>

**Additional information:**

<http://www.nirs.org/radiation/radhealth/radhealthhome.htm>

**IEER’s Healthy from the Start Campaign:**

<http://ieer.org/projects/healthy-from-the-start/>

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**About NIRS**

Nuclear Information and Resource Service (“NIRS”) is a non-profit organization with over 35,000 members across the United States and world. We were established in 1978 as the national resource and network hub for individuals and organizations opposed to nuclear energy, concerned about the public health and environmental impacts of radiation and radioactive waste, and interested in advancing a safe and sustainable energy future. NIRS has a mission to promote a nuclear-free, carbon-free energy policy and a concern for the health and safety of the people and the environment.