

**Statement by Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima
to the May Session of the UN General Assembly's Open-ended Working Group
on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for giving me the floor. I would like to say a few words as Mayor of the A-bombed city of Hiroshima and as President of Mayors for Peace, an organization of 7,042 cities from 161 countries and regions around the world.

First, let me quote U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry at a press conference in Hiroshima on April 11. Earlier that day, he and other foreign ministers of the G7 had visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and laid flower wreaths at the Cenotaph for the Atomic Bomb Victims. Mr. Kerry commented on the Museum's exhibits as a reminder of the depth of obligation that every person in a position of responsibility carries to create and pursue a world free from nuclear weapons. Mayors for Peace, together with a wide range of civil society partners, whole-heartedly supports such commitments for the sake of our citizens and all humanity. To this end, we will intensify our efforts to cultivate an international environment that transcends differences and promotes common values.

In this context, Mayors for Peace supports the General Assembly's decision to establish this second Open-ended Working Group. We strongly wish it to serve as a forum for constructive and effective discussions on a nuclear weapons convention and negotiations to conclude such, while giving due consideration to the positions of all UN member states.

According to some, international security still depends on the threatened use of nuclear weapons as prescribed by the doctrine of "nuclear deterrence" – a notion based on mutual distrust and the unspeakable horror the term implies. However, this theory's power exists only in the minds of its policymakers. The people of the world understand that nuclear deterrence offers no solution to the global issues we face. Nuclear weapons neither prevent nor effectively respond to terrorism—rather, their very existence brings new risk of use each day.

In order to address emerging challenges, the international community—cities in particular—needs to join forces to solidify our commitment to seek security without relying on nuclear weapons. Our efforts must reflect the collective desire for peace in a nuclear-free world. Let us unite under a shared awareness that we all belong to the same human family. Under such awareness, we shall strive together to enhance mutual understanding, and create a global community that treasures diversity. Our joint efforts also resonate the words in the UNESCO Constitution, "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." Hopes for achieving and defending this peace require the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

It is time for policymakers of the world to change their perspective and exercise decisive leadership. Most importantly, their decisiveness is required for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. It is only with such decisiveness that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation initiatives can be accelerated. The people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ask leaders around the world to visit the A-bombed cities and feel the earnest wishes of *hibakusha* that "no one else shall ever again suffer as we have." We sincerely hope that the Government representatives who have understood the earnest wishes of *hibakusha* for peace can cooperate with each other, transcend their differences, and overcome obstacles to nuclear abolition. We also believe that they can and should work hard to conclude a nuclear weapons convention.

For the purposes of this Open-ended Working Group, I ask you to conduct constructive deliberations, keep an open mind, respect diverse views, work to promote mutual understanding, and bridge diverse views to achieve a common goal. Mayors for Peace, together with our civil society partners, will join forces with you wholeheartedly in these common efforts and will support any initiatives towards our shared goal of peace.

Thank you very much.