

The 7th General Conference of Mayors for Peace

Press Conference

August 10 (Mon), 2009 15:15 – 16:00
Nagasaki Brick Hall (Meeting Room)

[Executive Cities of Mayors for Peace]

President (Hiroshima)	Tadatoshi Akiba Mayor, City of Hiroshima, Japan
Vice President (Florence)	Susanna Agostini Councilor, City of Florence, Italy
Vice President (Akron)	Donald L. Plusquellic Mayor, City of Akron, USA US Conference of Mayors
Vice President (Malakoff)	Michel Cibot General Manager, City of Malakoff, France Association Française des Communes, Départements et Régions pour la Paix (AFCDRP)
Vice President (Ypres)	Luc Dehaene Mayor, City of Ypres, Belgium
Vice President (Granollers)	Josep Mayoral i Antigas Mayor, City of Granollers, Spain
Vice President (Waitakere)	Robert Harvey Mayor, City of Waitakere, New Zealand
Vice President (Halabja)	Khder Kareem Mayor, City of Halabja, Kurdistan, Iraq
Vice President (Nagasaki)	Tomihisa Taue Mayor, City of Nagasaki, Japan

MC: Masayoshi Nakagawa, Director, Public Relations Section

Nagasaki City Hall

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, let us now start the press conference. My name is Nakagawa, Director of the Public Relations Section of Nagasaki City. I am acting as the Master of Ceremony.

The President and Vice Presidents of Mayors for Peace are gathered here, and we expect the press conference to continue until four o'clock. I would like to ask each one of the participants to offer their impressions of the General Conference. These statements will be followed by questions from the press. Let us begin the statements with the President and Mayor of Hiroshima, Mayor Akiba, please.

Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima

President of Mayors for Peace

Some vice president city participants have to leave at 3:45, so I suggest that we ask them to speak first. Is that OK?

Susanna Agostini, Councilor of Florence, Italy

In Italy, membership in Mayors for Peace is quite important. We have over 300 cities in Italy that joined this association, and we hope to double that number in a short while. After this meeting, we have high hopes, because the final appeal, is quite important. We can give a new role to mayors all over the world. Being the real representatives of the communities they work in, they are responsible for the health and the welfare of their people. And we will say that by welfare we mean environmental, not only physical, but also for job opportunities and all the civil rights. Mayors can help guarantee a better quality of life for their citizens.

We really hope that after signing the appeal today, the possibility of one of these horrible catastrophic events like the atomic bombing, together with other unfortunate events going on in our world, could all be abolished by 2020. Also, we are grateful for what Mayors for Peace is doing because we think that mayors should work together with civil society, representing the feelings of humankind. We are also glad that we can work with the leaders of the main countries in the world.

That is why we really appreciate what President Obama is doing, and we hope he will continue to do that. We will follow him in this campaign towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. We will keep on doing it in our cities and in our countries. As

Mayor Akiba said, we would like to thank him right now, together with Mayor Taue. And we really hope our patchwork blanket will become bigger and bigger. Thank you.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. That was Ms. Susanna Agostini, Councilor of the City of Firenze. Next is Mayor Plusquellic of Akron, please.

Donald L. Plusquellic, Mayor of Akron, USA

US Conference of Mayors

I begin by thanking Mayor Taue, staff and all of the individuals who have put on such a successful conference here. And for all of us around the world, mayors, citizens of our cities, we need to thank Mayor Akiba as well as Mayor Taue for their leadership in this important issue that everyone throughout the world needs to understand and be better educated. And it seems to me that has been the common theme today.

One of our major goals is to lead as mayors and to be able to continue to educate people on why what we are doing is vitally important. I am honored to be here representing the US Conference of Mayors, over 500 mayors throughout the United States, who do similar things in our state legislatures, and in particular as a group in Washington to lobby our representatives to get them to do those things that are important to our citizens. And I see Mayors for Peace as an important organization to educate, lobby and continue to work to get people to understand why this is so important.

And as earlier speakers said today, one of the most important problems that we face today is an economic one. Almost every country is affected, and yet this issue of nuclear disarmament can help in that situation. We spend so much money in a wasteful way, many would argue, spending it on military buildup, and many of those resources, much of that could go to dealing with the human needs throughout our societies.

In the United States, while we are viewed as a wealthy nation, we still have people who are on the poverty line. We have housing problems, we have infrastructural problems, and we have education problems in decaying schools. All of those problems are present in societies throughout our world. And if we are able to convince the world leaders of our missions, of our goals in a timely manner, we could have the human race address the many issues of how money being spent on nuclear weapons could be better

used.

I want to close by talking about how moving and memorable the experience of the ceremony was here; to be at the hypocenter, to think about what it was like 64 years ago, and then to listen to a survivor, the *hibakusha*, the 9 year-old who has such vivid memories of surviving that terrible day, is an experience that I will never forget. It is something that I think we all have a responsibility to share throughout the world to continue to tell the story of the survivors who witnessed it firsthand, and to continue to try to educate a new generation.

As the ceremony ended, and as I faced many of you, I also recognized some of the faces of those who asked me questions. I want to address something because I am going to have to leave, and many of you may want to ask the questions.

As a representative from the United States, I do not think it is necessary to try to reexamine and try to determine something about what was done more than 50 years ago. By getting dragged down in that issue, we tend to waste time, in my opinion, when we should be emphasizing that the two events that happened in August 1945 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki should never ever be repeated again anywhere in this world.

And by being dragged into an argument or discussion that affects my father's generation, although he passed away many years ago, my father spent 4 years serving in the Navy in the Pacific, his generation will always have a feeling and a belief that may be different than another generation.

But as I tell people in my own hometown, I carry pictures of my grandchildren around with me all the time. I keep it close to my heart, because it is for them that many of us work to improve the world, to improve their lives, to improve what they will be able to do in their lives, and it is, in my opinion, that focus that we, as leaders, as mayors, who lead in our own community and many instances lead our own nations that we take this message back and continue to speak loudly about the importance for my grandkids' generation. Do not focus on arguments that do not really matter so much right now; the issue is making certain that this never happens again on the face of the earth.

That is what I pledge to do as a mayor, and I believe it is the thing that the US Conference of Mayors can easily pledge, because we were one of the first, back in 1984, to start passing and approving resolutions against nuclear proliferation, and we have

continued to do that numerous times in the last over 20 years.

I joined with all the mayors here to pledge our support for the Nagasaki Appeal and I would urge national leaders throughout this world to focus on the future, the bright future that we want for our grandchildren. Thank you very much.

Nakagawa

Please excuse the two previous speakers, as they must now take their leave.

The next speaker is from the City of Malakoff, General Manager Michel Cibot, please.

Michel Cibot, General Manager of Malakoff, France

Association Française des Communes, Départements et Régions pour la Paix (AFCDRP)

I would like to talk about what had happened in 1975. For the first time I was able to listen to the testimony of *hibakusha*. That completely changed my life. Several years later, I met with Mr. Araki, then mayor of Hiroshima City. I thought at that time that we have to involve the citizens of Hiroshima to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons and ever since then I have visited Hiroshima many times. I also attended the previous Mayors for Peace meetings. Through the meetings with mayors and other city representatives, I was able to learn so many things. I believe this is like a university where I was able to learn the most precious things in my life. Now that we have completed our mission, I hope that I would be enlightened with new things. Today through the course of the discussions in the General Conference of Mayors for Peace, I was also able to learn many things, which is one of the very significant outcomes for me.

Another good thing about attending the General Conference is that we were able to outline the progress we need to accomplish our mission, the total abolition of nuclear weapons, and we were able to expand the organization. There has been progress witnessed in the past several days. I think there was a tremendous progress. We have compiled and approved the Nagasaki Appeal, and this Appeal can be considered one of the instruments or tools, which can be utilized to explain to our citizens what we need to do. We hope that we will be able to spread this Appeal further through the network of Mayors for Peace.

As the Mayor of Akron pointed out, the reduction of the military budget by 30% with allocation for better humanitarian use, of course, is a most important and fundamental

issue. It is unfortunate that we are not doing this today. And one more thing I would like to stress is that nuclear weapons are on the extreme opposite end against the protection of human rights, morals and international law. There is a total contradiction between what we are doing and what we are aiming at. And this tends to be disregarded in a nuclear-weapon state like France. As Professor Mogami said, the existence of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and genocide, which can destroy everything on the globe, have to be totally eliminated. How can anyone want to have something that could lead to the destruction of the entire human life?

Now I would like to express my appreciation to the host cities. I don't think I will be able to come back 50 years from now, but I will pass the baton to the younger generations when the time comes. We hope that we will be able to send younger delegates from France next time, as we did this time. Now that we have completed our mission, we are very much encouraged. Thank you very much.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. Now we would like to hear from Mr. Dehaene, Mayor of Ypres.

Luc Dehaene, Mayor of Ypres, Belgium

When you ask your question to a mayor, you do not get an answer, but a speech. I will try to be an exception.

The question was "what is the most important thing you had in mind when you are going back home." When I follow my brains, and think rationally, then this simple document "Nagasaki Appeal" is very, very important. This appeal is a strong, clear statement, as clear as it can be. And let us not forget that it represents the will of more than 3,000 mayors worldwide. And I assure you that at the NPT conference in May next year, our members will be close to 5,000.

But if I follow my heart, and think emotionally, then the meeting with the survivors is what I will never forget. And I am also thinking about the similarity that I felt as if I were confronted with the suffering in my own home country and in my own home town, the suffering of the generations of our parents and our grandparents. And I conclude that that suffering worldwide is the same everywhere. So it is good to pay tribute although it was a commemoration ceremony. I think it is a lesson you will never forget. So thank you.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much for your comment.

Now I would like to invite Mr. Josep Antigas, Mayor of Granollers.

Josep Antigas, Mayor of Granollers, Spain

It is my first visit in Japan, and the days I spent here in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, so far from our home, were full and valuable and opened our hearts.

We lived four days full of passion. Mayor Akiba spoke in his speech about passion, and I think that in municipal politics, the mayors' work is full of passion as they speak all day with citizens, with people. The main work for mayors is to speak to citizens, to learn from citizens, and we know that the citizens' need is a peaceful world, a better world; a world where we can change bombs to words and violence to dialogue. We, the mayors, want to represent this spirit in our cities, in our citizens.

We know that we will act for peace day by day from our cities, with citizens, and mayors are in the first row and have an important role in peace building in the world. Mayors want to play this role worldwide.

We approved the document "Nagasaki Appeal" that shows a roadmap for the future, and we know the future is based on education, and they are talking about between old people and young people, the students and the old people. The old people and the young speak together, and we can altogether build a better future. When we go back home, we know we are stronger now, because we are together. Thank you.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. The next speaker is Mr. Robert Harvey, Mayor of Waitakere, please.

Robert Harvey, Mayor of Waitakere, New Zealand

Konnichiwa. I greet you on behalf of the people of New Zealand. The hundred mayors whom I represent here have all signed to be Mayors for Peace. And so I am feeling a bit guilty to be honest, in a strange kind of way, because I come from a country that as whole country is nuclear free.

New Zealand has been nuclear free since 1975, and I was a protester for many, many

years against nuclear submarines and nuclear ships coming into the harbor. I've gone out on my canoe and my sailing ship and tried to ram the American submarines, I am glad that Mayor of Akron is not here to hear all this. But in 1975, New Zealand totally decided no more nuclear anything.

And so, I bring you the greetings of all those mayors, the Prime Minister of New Zealand, who is a friend of mine, and I handed my good friend here, Mayor Akiba, a letter from the Minister of Disarmament and Arms Control, which brought greetings to you all.

I am very proud of this, that I do not have such a hard job to do. The mayors of all the cities of New Zealand have signed up to be Mayors for Peace, including all those of the small municipalities. Although we only have four million people, we have never been attacked and that is a blessing also. But our children understand very much what nuclear weapons can do. We understand Japan's past and the terror that happened. And so I guess I am in a model country and I hear from my dear friends around the world how hard it must be to convince a whole nation. I have done that in a way.

And in my life I have protested from the day that I saw the Hiroshima panels in Auckland, probably I think in 1952 when I was 12 years old. I saw those giant panels depicting the destruction and torture of the people of Hiroshima when I was 12, and decided that I was going to live my life protesting. And now I am 68 years old and I am the longest serving mayor of New Zealand, and it is an honor to be here in Nagasaki, completing my life's work really in the anti-nuclear movement. I do not think I can add anymore. It has been a great journey, and I am so proud to be in the presence of two remarkable men, the Mayor of Nagasaki and the Mayor of Hiroshima. These are very special people on this planet in the time that we live. *Arigato.*

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. I would like to ask Mr. Khder Kareem, Halabja City Mayor.

Khder Kareem, Mayor of Halabja, Kurdistan, Iraq

I am sorry I cannot speak English, so I speak in Kurdish, but my colleague translate to English. First of all, I would like to send best regards to Mayor Taue, Nagasaki who welcomed us to this conference. And I also thank him for this beautiful commemoration of 64 years since the A-bomb attack on this city.

And I am very glad because I am with different people from different cities, different nations, that we were working for one aim of peace; because several years ago we could not connect to any nation or any people in our city due to the dictatorship of our regime. But nowadays we can declare what we have in our minds for peace.

I do not want to take your time, but I would like to tell you one important thing. I came from a city that was totally destroyed with chemical weapons. So I know that without peace, human beings cannot live together.

Twenty one years before, our city was attacked with different kinds of chemical weapons, as a consequence, more than five thousand civilians were killed, and more than ten thousand were injured, and the rest of our people emigrated to Iran. At that time, only a few countries in the world community showed any reaction to this tragedy.

But after twenty one years, this city neglected by the world community has now become a center of peace not only for Iraq but also for the Middle East. We also have opened an office for Mayors for Peace in Iraq, not only for Iraqi cities but also for neighboring countries.

One of the things I was proud of is that if you ask the children in my city as well as the old men what is Nagasaki, Hiroshima, Ypres, and Marzabotto, they can tell you the details about these tragedies.

And we hope we can all work together for peace and, specifically, request the President of all countries to visit the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We hope we can work together to remember these cities, so new generations know what happened there.

Finally I would like to thank you again and we hope you will all work for our shared aim that we could abolish nuclear weapons by 2020. Thank you.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. Now I would like to invite Mayor Akiba for your comments.

Mayor Akiba

This is the last day of our conference, and I am very glad that we adopted the Nagasaki Appeal. The future direction of Mayors for Peace has a solid foundation. And I believe that this is a very powerful appeal. I would like to have it adopted at the

upcoming NPT Review Conference next year.

For that purpose, various ideas on how to be involved with the NPT Review Conference have been discussed. Each of those specific ideas might not have been reflected into this appeal, but we got a lot of firm ideas and hints on how to be involved for the promotion of the NPT Review Conference. We usually communicate via e-mail and such but it is significant for like-minded NGO representatives, citizens and also mayors from around the world to get together to exchange their opinions, which we can see materialize. And by meeting together and reaching a consensus, we can create even more energy. I believe that that is the fruit of our meeting.

And through this process, I confirmed various basic issues. The first one is, as President Obama said in his very eloquent speech, the power to change the world is coming from the individual, each of us. And we confirmed that this power is most effective when it is based on the history and experiences of tragedies in each city.

Secondly, though we do have potential energy, in order to utilize it or to make it real, we have to start from a very basic level. We ourselves have to be involved in activities at a local level. At the same time, collaboration is very important, and having collaboration will create further big waves and energy with broader perspectives internationally and globally. So we repeatedly used the word ‘together.’ In the Nagasaki Appeal, we also used the expression: “Yes, together we can abolish nuclear weapons.” So it was confirmed during this meeting that working hand in hand we can effectively promote our activities.

Thirdly, as the Mayor of Akron mentioned, we have confirmed that it is vitally important for us to do certain things in order to give a brighter future to future generations. That’s why education is very important and nuclear experiences have to be well communicated to the coming generations.

And finally, mayors who are the leaders of their cities got together in this General Conference and adopted this wonderful Nagasaki Appeal. The number of member cities is over 3,000 right now, and these 3,000 mayors are not stuck in the conventional old framework. They have started to work on a new framework for the sake of a new generation in a new situation. This new framework indicates that the potential of individual citizens can be well utilized and well enhanced. It is a vision that must be shared by their mayors. A lot of capable mayors with such vision and leadership

attended the General Conference, and that's why this appeal was so good.

Therefore, we are able to have more hope for future activities, and in that sense, I am grateful to you, to all the mayors and other participants for your contribution.

As for the press, we noticed by observing your reports that you are getting a better understanding of our spirit, and you are providing good communication in a positive way. I do appreciate your work. Thank you very much.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. Mayor Taue of Nagasaki, please.

Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki

I am asked to give my impression at the end of the General Conference of Mayors for Peace. On behalf of the host city, I would like to express my appreciation, because this is the first time the meeting was held solely in Nagasaki. Although there were some small inconveniences, they were offset by people's endeavors and efforts. We were able to end this meeting with smiles on our faces. For this I would like to express my gratitude. Especially to the interpreters; the many citizens of Nagasaki who attended the Welcome Reception and the Closing Ceremony; and the children who sang and danced for us, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I believe this Conference has given us a very good opportunity to disseminate the spirit of our A-bombed cities to the mayors gathered here from all corners of the world. There were opportunities for them to listen to the voices of *hibakusha*. They went to the A-bomb Museum, and they attended the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony. I am sure the feelings, earnest wishes and experiences of the citizens of Nagasaki were felt by each one of the mayors who attended. I believe that by connecting with local citizens working to abolish nuclear weapons, they were able to understand the importance of peace. Our citizens showed how they are engaged in various arenas to try and achieve peace. High school students report on their activities and the aging *hibakusha* continue to tell their stories. I think this was very clearly heard by the mayors.

Secondly, I was encouraged by so many mayors having such a strong commitment to peace. I am sure that after they return to their respective countries and cities, they will tell everyone what they have accomplished over these past four days in Nagasaki. I think that would be very significant.

Thirdly, as a member of Mayors for Peace, I was able to renew my understanding and idea about the potential of Mayors for Peace. More than 3,000 municipalities have joined Mayors for Peace and during the four days of this General Conference, we were able to listen to the different conditions and backgrounds of participating cities, and their experiences of war. I was able to feel what they had experienced. Although they have not experienced the atomic bombing, there are so many cities that have experienced massacres, genocides or other tragic incidents caused by human beings. This General Conference was indeed a gathering of such mayors and the representatives of cities that feel the preciousness of peace. Even if there are differences from country to country and we see negotiations at an impasse or stalemate, I believe that mayors will be able to create our own new framework and network by helping our citizens openly exchange their feelings.

In that sense, I am confident that in the future activities of Mayors for Peace will grow and develop. As the number of member cities has rapidly increased and each member city has its own background, a lot of evolving and developing in the administration of the organization will be necessary.

In many ways, I came to recognize the importance of Mayors for Peace as well as the mutual learning process. We hope that we will be able to sprint or jump onto the next stage together. As Mayor Akiba said, 'Together' is our key word. I hope that we will be able to put another new step. Thank you very much.

Nakagawa

Thank you very much. We are a little bit behind the schedule, but we would like to entertain questions from the reporters. Please introduce yourself—your name and your affiliation, and to whom you would like to ask your question. Kyodo News, please.

Question: Kyodo News

I am Kawamoto from Kyodo News. Thank you very much for your hard work during the past four days. Here is the first question from the journalists to Mayor Akiba and Mayor Taue. The Nagasaki Appeal was adopted today, and there are 6 requests and 4 activities included. What are the most important elements of each one of these items?

Mayor Akiba

Of course there are many other things that we would like to incorporate into the

Nagasaki Appeal, but we narrowed them down to 6 and 4, so it is difficult for me to choose which is the most important. Well maybe the priority is in the order of the number, number 1 is given the highest priority. I think that is correct and you can take it as it is. If you ask us whether number 1 is definitely more important than number 2, it is difficult for me to answer, because we do need to improve communication within our network or membership as stated in number 2, but it is also important to ask the major nuclear-weapon states' leaders to visit Nagasaki and Hiroshima as stated in number 1. So everything is important and we would like to achieve everything in different stages. Of course we may prioritize them depending on the situation, but each one of them is important. So in the best timing, in the best situation, we would like to work to achieve all of these.

Mayor Taue

I agree with Mayor Akiba. Well, maybe the perspectives are different, so we cannot set an order of priority. But number 1, as overwrapped with what I mentioned in the Peace Declaration yesterday, is very important.

Nakagawa

The next person, please?

Question: the Chugoku Shimbun

My name is Kanasaki from the Chugoku Shimbun, and I have a question for Mayor Akiba and Mayor Taue. Regarding the most important target announced in this conference: the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol is to be adopted at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In what way do you envision the adoption of the Protocol at the NPT Review Conference? For example, will it be an independent resolution like the Resolution on the Middle East at the time of the 1995 Review Conference, when the NPT was extended, or would the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol have to be incorporated into the final document of the NPT? Since the agenda was already decided during the PrepCom last May in New York, how will you go about achieving that? It must be very difficult to include the Protocol into that agendum. What is your thought or planning process?

Mayor Akiba

Of course in order to achieve our goal, there are many challenges. And by solving these challenges, we will achieve our final goal. What is important in that process? If we limit our scope of activities and fail to implement other things that are out of our

scope, we would limit our potential, even though we have great potential to realize our goal. So of course depending on the timing, and depending on the situation, we have to utilize such potential as much as possible. Our final aim is to abolish nuclear weapons by 2020, and for that purpose, we have to ask every possible area or forum to utilize the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol. Any form would be fine, including an adoption at the NPT Review Conference, or at the UN General Assembly prior to it. Therefore, we do not want to narrow down our possibilities beforehand.

Mayor Taue

Many cities have joined us to help with the 2020 Vision campaign. And by setting a specific goal for our activities, we have been able to get a lot of cities to join us. This is because we have specified a final target date. From that perspective, I think the 2020 Vision has played a big part. As Mayor Akiba mentioned, to what extent we can progress depends on the situation. Thank you.

Question: the Nishinippon Shimbun

My name is Mori, from the Nishinippon Shimbun. In order to have the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol adopted, the draft Protocol has to be proposed at the NPT Review Conference. Which country is going to make the formal proposal, if that is decided? Would you please let us know which country is going to put this protocol on the table? Was this discussed during the General Conference of Mayors for Peace?

Mayor Akiba

Of course if we are going to propose this to the United Nations, the official members are representatives of the state parties. Therefore, we have to ask the representatives of the member states of the UN to submit this to the NPT. In the past, we have engaged in different sorts of activities for the preparation for the NPT Review Conference in May 2010. For example, during the NPT PrepCom this year, we discussed it with ambassadors as a lobbying activity, and before that, we have done similar things in Geneva and New York as well.

We hope that we will be able to witness and realize the fruit, or we will be able to see the results in the General Assembly of the United Nations in this coming fall. I think some good points were raised in the PrepCom. But it was just a short time after the inauguration of President Obama and our appeal was not adequate to be understood. But now that President Obama has come to the stage, I think the situation is much better.

At this time we had a lot of different ambassadors who visited Hiroshima as well as Nagasaki to participate in this General Conference of Mayors for Peace. Through those connections in channels, we hope that we will be able to strengthen what we have been doing for future activities.

Nakagawa

We would like to extend the time until 4:30, so we can accept one or two more questions.

Question: the Asahi Shimbun

I am Kado from the Asahi Shimbun. I have a question for Mayor Akiba. This time more than 100 Japanese cities took part in the conference, for the first time since you opened membership to domestic cities in Japan. By doing so what kind of expectation did you place on them? I hear that the number of Japanese member cities is 302, accounting for about 20% of the total number of municipalities, and how do you propose to use them in the future?

Mayor Akiba

Well, the number is not correct, so please get the correct number from the Secretariat. The number of domestic member cities in Japan is over 360.

Democracy works on the power of the majority. For example, in elections, the majority has influence. With that power comes the ability to influence. In this sense, we would like to make the best use of the growing number of member cities.

I do not know how this will affect the upcoming Lower House General Election scheduled at the end of this month. Probably our stronger power may influence the results of the election, and if so, I am very glad.

Question: the Chugoku Shimbun

Thank you. I am from the Chugoku Shimbun. I have a question for Mayor Akiba. This is the 7th General Conference of Mayors for Peace, and compared to the 6th or 5th Conferences, did you see anything unique this time? Compared to the previous one, the world situation regarding nuclear weapons has been drastically changing, so from that perspective, do you see any differences compared to the previous conferences?

Mayor Akiba

This time and every time we have very intense gatherings. If I dare to find some difference, then maybe due to President Obama's speech in Prague, we saw more positive participation in this conference.

For instance, at the draft committee meeting for the Nagasaki Appeal, which we have just briefly reported on, we had a very good discussion on the draft. Of course there have been good discussions in the previous meetings as well, but generally speaking, a draft meeting often takes time and gets stuck on detailed points. But this time we came up with the final draft in a very short time, and all opinions were discussed and summarized in very positive ways. That would imply that all of us believe that it's possible to achieve the target of the 2020 Vision campaign and we committed ourselves to doing so. In that sense, this was a very energetic conference.

Well, it maybe due to outside situations, namely President Obama's speech. At the same time, even though Hiroshima and Nagasaki share the same experience of the A-bombings, the background of the history, the nature and the culture is different between our two cities. We organized the meeting this time in Nagasaki, and with assistance from the citizens of Nagasaki as well as the *hibakusha* in this area, who had quite an impact and influence on the conference. I believe that this led to a very successful conference. Of course there was also a great contribution from Mayor Taue.

Nakagawa

Any further questions? If not, we would like to conclude this press conference.

No more questions? Thank you very much.