

The 7th General Conference of Mayors for Peace

Section Meeting I

**PASSING THE FLAME:
From *hibakusha* to children,
for the peaceful resolution of conflicts**

*August 9 (Sun), 2009 14:00 – 17:00
Nagasaki Brick Hall*

Chairperson: **Stephan Weil**
Vice President of Mayors for Peace
Lord Mayor of Hannover, Germany

**A-bomb Survivor's
Testimony:** **Tsukasa Uchida**
Nagasaki A-bomb survivor

Speakers: **Jean-Joel Lemarchand**
Deputy Mayor, Choisy-Le-Roi, France
Association Française des Communes, Départements et
Régions pour la Paix (AFCDRP)
Hiroyuki Nakata
Vice Mayor of Sapporo, Japan
Miho Cibot Shimma
Association Française des Communes, Départements et
Régions pour la Paix (AFCDRP), France
Robert Harvey
Vice President of Mayors for Peace
Mayor of Waitakere, New Zealand
Estifanos Afeworki Haile
Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan, Eritrea

Chairperson: Stephan Weil, Lord Mayor of Hannover, Germany

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for attending our discussion. I know the time during such conferences after lunch is a dangerous one. In Germany, we talk about “soup coma,” because most people are a little bit sleepy, but I hope we have a lively discussion. My name is Stephan Weil, Lord Mayor of Hannover in Germany. Hannover is a city with a population of half a million, and we have been a member of Mayors for Peace since early the 1980s, so we are part of the first generation of member cities. It is an honor for me to serve as a chair of this discussion. Let’s get started.

In this first Section Meeting, while reflecting on the experiences of Nagasaki and the atomic bombing, we would like to discuss the possibility of reconciliation for solving the various conflicts throughout our world, an idea expressed eloquently by the *hibakusha*. In addition, we should also discuss how we might pass on our experiences regarding war and recovery to the next generation of children, who will inherit our world.

Before we begin, however, in order to better understand these issues, we would like to listen to a few words from someone who experienced the atomic bomb attack in Nagasaki. I would like to introduce Mr. Tsukasa Uchida. Mr. Uchida was working at a weapons factory as a mobilized student when the bomb was dropped. Mr. Uchida, thank you for coming. Please go right ahead. Thank you very much.

A-bomb Survivor’s Testimony: “I witnessed hell”

Tsukasa Uchida, Nagasaki A-bomb survivor

As introduced, my name is Tsukasa Uchida. I am very honored to be able to have this opportunity to share my experiences at this important gathering and I would like to extend my gratitude. The fact I am standing here is something of wonder, and so please listen to my experience. The title is, “I witnessed hell.”

That war was nothing but a nightmare, especially for one like myself who lost five family members. My family was living at a place called Matsuyama-cho, less than a hundred meters from my house was the hypocenter where the A-bomb was dropped and now the memorial monolith is located.

At that time, the food shortage was more serious than we had ever imagined. We

depended on coupons to exchange for daily goods. I would like to mention that we also suffered from food shortage during the war. We were starving very badly in those days. We occasionally visited farmers on the outskirts of the city to purchase food. With this small amount of food supply, we were barely surviving with continual hunger in Nagasaki.

I would now like to tell you my experiences on August 9, 1945 in Nagasaki. I was a junior high school boy. In the third year of junior high school, we were all mobilized to work at a munitions factory which made military goods. So my daily task was to work at the factory of military supplies.

That morning, August 9, 1945, when I woke up, I asked my father, who was sleeping next to me, what time it was, but my father's watch had stopped. His watch showed that it was 6:10. Neither of us noticed that the watch had stopped.

In August, there were greater numbers of bombings in Nagasaki every day. In the midnight of August 8, getting into August 9, we heard a lot of alarms and air raid warnings. With such alarms, we would go to shelters. The shelter was located at the place now called the Peace Park, on a hill in Matsuyama-cho. There were several buildings there, and at the west side of the hill, there was a shelter built where we could run into when there were air-raid warnings.

In the previous night, our family of six was in the shelter, and we had just come back home from the shelter. My father had probably forgotten to wind up the watch. Of course the watches those days were not run by batteries, but wound. Probably he had not done so and that was why the watch was stopped that morning.

After eating my potato porridge, as I was putting on my shoes, I looked at the clock near the doorway. It was past seven o'clock. For 50 minutes the watch had stopped. So I rushed out the house to run to the factory. But as I was getting out of the house, I remember that I blamed my father for my being late. I blamed him as if it was all his fault, but that was the last conversation I had with him, which I regret very much, even to this day. Including my father, all of my family members were killed by the A-bomb at our house in Matsuyama-cho. They died instantly in the blazing inferno.

So I finally reached the Mitsubishi Ohashi Factory. At around 8:30a.m., the air-raid

alarm started again, so we, junior high school students, assembled in front of an air-raid shelter on the hillside about 300 meters from the east gate of the factory. Here, we were told by the chemistry teacher that the bomb that had attacked Hiroshima three days before was a new type of bomb which must have been an atomic bomb that applied the principle of nuclear fission. This was something unknown to all of us and it was a great shock and a surprise. This was the first time we heard of such a bomb and we were very shocked. But three days after Hiroshima, the same bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. Of course we had no way to know that would happen.

After a while, the warning was released and we went back to our workplace in the factory. In the factory, machine tools were already operating making a large noise. My job was the finishing of components for precision machines, so I hurried to the machine where the vice was located.

Then, all of a sudden, a strong flash of light ran from the sky through the high ceiling of the factory building. It was furious, a very strong flash. At that moment, the glass sheet that was used for the roofing to take in light broke into pieces by the blast and fell all over the floor. Pieces of glass rained all over the place. I instantly lied flat on the floor with my face down and I tried to cover my head with my hands like this. In between my fingers, pieces of glass stuck deep into my skull. My cuts were very deep, and I bled a great deal. I thought I was going to die.

Fortunately, I had a towel around my head, so with the towel, I tried to wipe the blood. I took the towel off my head and I tried to stop bleeding with the towel, but it was beyond my capability. The towel was soaked with blood and I would wring out the blood and then put the towel back on my head. I did this over and over, but still the bleeding did not stop. I thought I was going to die.

Fortunately, there were people who came to rescue me. So three times I had to wring the towel soaked with blood, I remember. Soon after, I realized that wires were melted like bend candy and hung from the ceiling. Also I realized that I was surrounded by many dead bodies. About 900 meters from the factory, there was an underground factory, and some rescue team came to rescue us in our factory. I was one of the first people to be rescued, and I was carried on a stretcher to a hill nearby, where I received first-aid care. There were no good medicines, but there were some herbs that were used to cure my cuts. Mugwort was used to stop my bleeding. I started to think I

might survive.

Once the bleeding had stopped, I started to worry about my family in Matsuyama-cho. Of course, I was very wary, and still quite shaky, but I went down the hill and crossed a small river, and walked along the rail tracks. As I walked along the tracks, I got close to the Matsuyama-cho crossing. The place was filled with broken and burnt bricks, and also human skeletons covered by thick ash. It looked like a vast desert. I think the ash must have included quite a bit of radiation.

It must have been around one p.m., and the first rescue train was arriving at the station. From the railway bridge at Ohashi toward the paddy field, about 500 meters was full of people seriously burnt all over their bodies, and people with burnt skin hanging down. I managed to get on the rescue train as well, where I found my close school mate Haruo Nakamura, whom I was with that morning. He jumped on the train before me. He was burnt from head to toe in the most disastrous way, which made me lose my words. He could hardly keep his eyes open, but he seemed to recognize my voice. Touching my blood-covered body, he encouraged me by saying, "We should survive together. We should live together." However, death was steadily approaching him. This was truly an encounter of two people who were wandering between life and death in the desolation of the disastrous atomic bomb.

Now, I would like to talk about my experience living together with my mother. On that day, in the dark, the train arrived at Iwamatsu station, one station before Omura Station. The local fire company volunteers took me on a stretcher to the naval hospital. The next morning I was awakened by the noise of beds moved out of the room one after another. I was sad, thinking I was left behind and those were other patients who were getting well and leaving the hospital. But sometime later, I realized something was wrong. I fearfully asked a nurse about them. Then she told me all six other patients in the room had died. I was shocked and trembled with tremendous fear. I found countless pieces of broken glass coming off my body and scattered in my bed.

Despite falling into a coma several times, I survived thanks to the best possible care at that time. I was allowed to leave the hospital in a week. I got thirteen stitches in my head. Strangely enough, I do not remember how I got on the train again. I headed to my home but I do not remember how I made it. I got off at the Michinoo Station and headed for my home in Matsuyama-cho. I happened to see my mother near an

in-the-tunnel factory in the Sumiyoshi neighborhood. Both of us could not believe our eyes.

I was wearing a thin bath robe and straw sandals given to me by the hospital. My mother was overwhelmed with joy and she frantically clung to me. She had been searching for me at a number of shelters. She said that she was so exhausted, and one time dozed off. Then she saw me with warm blood dripping in her dream. Then she felt that I might be alive somewhere.

When we came close to Ohashi-machi, I thought I had seen my house intact. However, it was mere illusion. The main street was cleared after one week from the bombing but still some unidentified bodies were left here and there. On the land the Sakurai family used to live on the northern end of Matsuyama-cho, there were no bodies, but on the concrete floor, I saw six skulls lined up with their dark eyeholes looking up into the air. There were no other body parts, probably burnt down to ashes in the heat.

I finally came home but the house was gone. I heard later that only a part of my father's body was found. I was seized by anger but I had nobody to vent it at. We should never condone such absurdity. My immediate younger brother was in his first year in the middle school. When Nagasaki was first bombed on August 1 about a week before, my younger brother was very very shocked to see the tragedy caused by this tremendous bombardment and he urged our father to evacuate soon. But my father, because of his very strong belief, literally scolded him, calling him unpatriotic. In those days, big cities promoted evacuating children, but we did not know that. It was very sad that local cities were left behind. We were not allowed to evacuate children from local cities and our father firmly believed that Japan would never perish because the country was led by a divine emperor. His belief determined the fate of our family.

The emperor was believed to be a living god. He looked like a man, but actually a god. That was a strong belief that supported the imperial system in Japan. I think it is complete nonsense. I think we should have been more critical. But if we had been critical, then we would be called unpatriotic. So, my younger brother and our whole family shared a tragic fate. I have no words to express my deep regret.

So far I have talked about my experience with the atomic bomb. In the end, I would like to talk about the future and how to bring peace to the world. Nobody can deny

that the use of the atomic bombs during World War II was “evil.” What we have to do now is never to repeat the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We have a mission to send out to the world the stories of A-bomb survivors who experienced unbearable pain, not as political propaganda but as a message for peace. I hope that nobody will forget this terrible and absurd act. This concludes my presentation. Thank you very much for listening.

Lord Mayor Weil

Mr. Uchida, thank you very much for your testimony. This morning, we took part in the impressive memorial at the Nagasaki Peace Ceremony, and now additionally we have heard very impressive and moving memories of a survivor. Thank you very much for this introduction. I think it has been the best we got.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is not easy after such a report to start a discussion, but I will first give the opportunity to ask Mr. Uchida, if there is something to be asked. Is there anybody here who wants to ask questions to Mr. Uchida? Thank you. So, Mr. Uchida, thank you very much for your introduction.

Now we have a lot of time left. We are supposed to have a coffee break at 3:00pm for about 20 minutes.

Now we should start to discuss the question on how to pass on the experiences to the next generation that is the question in many countries all over the world. For example, in Germany, the people who can talk about their own experiences in the darkest period of our history are getting very old. Their experiences must be passed on. That is the matter of fact also of a lot of other countries.

I would like to ask a few brief comments to start our discussion from some of our participating cities. And I would like to ask Mr. Jean-Joel Lemarchand from France to start with his speech. Mr. Lemarchand, the floor is yours.

Jean-Joel Lemarchand, Deputy Mayor, Choisy-Le-Roi, France Association Française des Communes, Départements et Régions pour la Paix (AFCDRP)

I would like to be very brief. I do not want to go too much into the break time. I have been very moved by Mr. Uchida’s story. He saw hell and remembered about his

father's watch being stopped. There is a popular French song about a wristwatch:

“Time on the wristwatch left was different from the time shown on the clock on the wall, when a strange thing happened. The wristwatch was burned and melted with the heat...”

The lyrics were about war. And human beings may be forced to die because of fearful weapons. There is something that we have to think about.

I represent the small town of Choisy-Le-Roi, population of 40,000. Even the residents of such small town may share the same fear. I do not mean to present political propaganda or anything. I think that the tragic experiences and pain of the *hibakusha* should be remembered all the time.

Arthur Rambaud, a French poet, said that “fearful people are coming” in his poem, because as we start our life at the point where our predecessors finish their jobs. I think Rambaud is quite right. We have to hand down our tragic experiences to younger generations.

In the ceremony this morning, people talked about their experiences, and the mayors of different towns and citizens should take precautions about such fearful possibilities. So citizens, local cities and local governments should participate in the movement to stop it. The significance of Mayors for Peace is to unite citizens to take action. This organization can take leadership to have our cities and citizens be involved in handing down their fearful experiences.

This morning we visited the Nagasaki Peace Statue, the monument of the A-bombing, and I saw doves flying out and I remembered the seas. Seas are infinite. It continues indefinitely. I think this statue unites people. Just like seas, I would like to see our activities spread around the world and we would like to continue our efforts. Thank you very much.

Lord Mayor Weil

Thank you very much. The next speaker is from Japan, the Vice Mayor of Sapporo, Mr. Hiroyuki Nakata. Mr. Nakata, please go ahead. The floor is yours.

Hiroyuki Nakata, Vice Mayor of Sapporo, Japan

Hello everyone. Thank you for the kind introduction. My name is Hiroyuki Nakata, and I am the Vice Mayor of Sapporo, Japan. I would like to congratulate you for the 7th General Conference of Mayors for Peace, and I am very honored to have this opportunity.

As you know, Sapporo City is located in Hokkaido, which is the northernmost island of Japan. We have 1.9 million people as our population and it is the 5th largest city in Japan. The Winter Olympics were held there in 1972, so many of you may know the name Sapporo by this Olympics.

Today I would like to share with you the kind of activities we are engaged in, in Sapporo City, in order to convey the message to the children for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Seventeen years ago in 1992, the City of Sapporo designated our city as a city of peace and declared the abolition of nuclear weapons. We consider war as the largest cause of destruction of global environment and there is no greater civil welfare than peace. Based upon these thoughts, we are trying to educate the people with regard to the importance of peace by sharing experiences on the A-bomb and war.

Sapporo City is located geographically far from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We were less affected by the war. We know about war as knowledge, but it is quite rare to actually listen to war experiences directly. People tend to take the present peace for granted. So we feel it is important not only to provide knowledge about the war, but also to share the experiences and reality of war.

At the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit held last year in 2008, we were able to hold the Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb Exhibition co-organized by the cities of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and the National Council of Japan Nuclear Free Local Authorities as a very significant occasion. Unfortunately, we were not able to secure the visits by the leaders of summit countries but we were able to have visits by the ambassador to Japan from Mexico and also from many people from Japan as well as foreign people who visited Toyako on the occasion of the Summit. They were able to see the pictures and also the actual materials that were affected by the A-bombs. And we were able to convey the importance of nuclear abolition and peace.

Also, storytellings with pictures of A-bomb experiences from Nagasaki were held more than ten times all over Sapporo during the Summit period. Let me introduce the comments we received from visitors to the A-bomb Exhibition:

“After looking at the pictures immediately after the bombing, children’s clothes, a lunch box and roof tiles that were burnt by the A-bomb, it was a very big shock to me. I have read about war in books, but this shock was much greater.”

“By actually listening to the voices of A-bomb victims, I was able to understand the sorrow they had experienced, and the prejudice, discrimination, and mental trauma they had to fight with all their lives. Although I have knowledge learned in the past, I was very shocked by your experiences I heard. I was able to feel for myself the tragedy of war and respect for peace.”

Some people even said that:

“I should go to Hiroshima and Nagasaki” and

“I learned a lot. I would like to convey the message to the people around me.”

As you can see from their impressions, it was a very valuable opportunity for people to really, actually feel for themselves what the war was like, through real pictures, A-bombed materials and the voice of the *hibakusha*.

The City of Sapporo would like to continue having these kinds of opportunities in order to convey to our citizens the experiences of the A-bomb and the war, so that the children can actually feel for themselves the experiences of war and the importance of world peace. We would like them to consider what they can do and we would like to provide them with such opportunities.

At the City of Sapporo, we have a variety of events including an annual competition of children’s drawings and compositions about what they can do for world peace, programs to send children to visit A-bomb sites, exchange programs through the internet with A-bomb survivors, an exchange program to directly convey war experiences from those who experienced wars to children, and events to think about the importance of peace through music, film etc. By providing children with various kinds of opportunities to think about peace, we hope we can nurture their spirit to achieve peaceful future.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my respect to the cities of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki for the efforts they have been making for the abolition of nuclear weapons and for world peace. We should not leave all these efforts to these two cities only. I feel that it is important that all the cities in Japan consider this important issue along with the cities of the world, and convey the message to our citizens and children on how important world peace is. That would contribute to gain momentum for peace. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

Lord Mayor Weil

Thank you very much, Mr. Nakata, for your remarks, especially about the examples you gave us about your practice. Now we go on again back to France, I would like to ask Mrs. Miho Cibot Shinma. The floor is yours.

Miho Cibot Shimma

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

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Today I am representing France, but allow me to speak in Japanese. I am from Malakoff, in France, next to Paris.

Since 1982, I have been talking about the tragedy of the A-bombing. I started an exhibition of A-bomb materials produced in Japan, a screen play of a documentary film on the A-bomb, an exhibition of A-bomb photographs and A-bomb survivors' testimonies. Later on, I published three books on the A-bomb in France, and I produced animated films on peace education in Japanese, English and French. We showed them in 67 countries. Its title is "On a Paper Crane: Tomoko's Adventure" and in 2005, NHK international radio station broadcasted it in 24 languages.

As you know, France is a nuclear weapon state and it is not easy to talk about nuclear weapons to French people. While I tried to talk about it, they say, "Japanese people killed lots of people in Nanjing in China," or "dropping the atomic bomb ended the war earlier." When I ask them if they know Nagasaki, they say "it is a city well known for pollution," or "the town experienced a big earthquake." In 2005, when we had the A-bomb exhibition in Paris, some people were very surprised to learn that A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, too.

Despite that, I have been active for the past 27 years, simply because of the kind support from the citizens and cities, or communes that support conveying the reality of the

A-bombings. Especially in 1997, the Association Francaise des Communes, Departments, Regions pour la Paix (AFCDRP) was established and played an important role.

However, the damages of A-bomb have not been well known yet. According to the official report of France, 150,000 people were engaged in French nuclear tests, which took place 210 times. According to their testimonies, those workers were not protected from radiation. Also sufficient information was not given to local people. If they knew more about possible damages by nuclear radiation, they would have taken more caution or they would have opposed strongly. Those who had formerly engaged in these tests have later developed malignant tumors and many other serious diseases, and many of them already passed away.

Then, in 2001, then the Association of Veterans of Nuclear Tests (AVEN) was established. The survey by former military doctors revealed that the damages were far greater than expected. This group and also the Polynesian Victims Group “Moruroa e tatou” and the association of nuclear test victims in the Sub-Sahara area of Algeria got together to sue the French government. Now, the French government is preparing a law to compensate victims. However, I am afraid that the law will be applicable to only a small number of victims.

The *hibakusha* or nuclear test victims are especially concerned about the future of their children. Their children born after they were engaged in nuclear tests have shown genetic abnormalities and diseases. 23.5 out of 1,000 infants passed away within 1 year after birth, which is three times higher than average infant mortality rate in France. Even those children who are healthy now may develop similar diseases. So the former employees of nuclear test grounds and local residents are quite afraid for their children's future. They ask us how Hiroshima and Nagasaki *hibakusha* are doing and how the Japanese government is supporting them, and how are the second and the third generations of *hibakusha*.

So there are a number of *hibakusha* around the world. Nuclear tests by the US were conducted 1,053 times, 738 times by the Soviet Union and Russia, and adding the number of tests by others; the total number comes up to 2,099 times by May 2009. The power of the H-bomb tests in the atmosphere was 800 to 1,000 times greater than the explosion of the A-bomb dropped on Hiroshima.

Production of nuclear weapons and nuclear tests contaminate the Earth. Lots of people were exposed to nuclear radiation. Wars and nuclear bombs are big problems of global pollution. To protect the global environment, and to realize a more peaceful world, we should hand down the *hibakusha* testimonies to younger generations.

September 21 is the UN International Day of Peace, so we are going to carry out a campaign seeking the total ban of nuclear weapons for a week. We would like to continue our work in search for a nuclear-free world in cooperation with other members of Mayors for Peace. Thank you.

Lord Mayor Weil

Thank you very much Madam Cibot. Seems to be you are the ideal person to link France and Japan.

Ladies and gentlemen, I suggest now to have a break for a quarter of an hour, to have some coffee and refresh ourselves. We should meet again quarter past three. Thank you very much so far, and see you in few minutes.

[Break]

Lord Mayor Weil

So ladies and gentlemen, may we continue? I hope all of you are refreshed and looking forward to the second half of our discussion. I would like to ask anybody who wants to give remarks to prepare them and give me the notice after the next speech, which will be the remarks by the Mayor of Waitakere, New Zealand, our friend Robert Harvey. Please, the floor is yours.

Robert Harvey, Mayor of Waitakere, New Zealand

Kia ora tatou! Haere mai, haere mai, haere mai, tiki mai haere mai, taki mai, haere mai! (Hello everyone, welcome, welcome, welcome to be here)

I greet you in the ancient language of New Zealand of the Maori people. I bring their gift to you from across the Pacific. Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to say a few words.

I have been deeply committed to the cause of peace for nearly 55 years. I grew up in a family of pacifists and I went on my first anti-nuclear march, probably when I was

about 10 years old in the 1950s. So I am honoured to be here and humbled by the occasion.

I would just like to acknowledge Mr. Uchida. I would like to acknowledge his story and his testimony. I felt it was one of the deepest and most tragic stories I have ever heard in my life, told by a living person. I smelt the bomb and I felt his terror and I felt his blood. I felt I was in the presence of a real living treasure and that is what I think is important, that in our lifetime we are hearing a story being told by someone who was actually there. He was a living documentary. And I think his special place in our lives and in this time cannot be underestimated. As I said there, I thought what is he thinking about this world now in the 21st century and about children at the same age as he was on that fateful day, this day 64 years ago? How can he tell his story to the children now? That, to me, is of a huge importance.

Look, I am a mayor of a large New Zealand city and I am involved violence and the control and management of violence in one of the most beautiful cities in the world. 200,000 people, yet there is the pressure on children to play war games, to see violence on video, puf, puf, puf, puf, (sound of gunfire) is huge everywhere.

His story is not a game, his story is real. His blood, the skin, his friend burnt, is real. I think that the children today have got to start respecting life. They see and have so much pressure, from as I said, from video games, movies, internet. It has just reached the level where young children killing themselves, suicide is high. Wherever you see indigenous people, they are taking the option of death. His story makes it real.

I feel that we have a responsibility to have those stories told to the people, the young children that were at the same age as he was. To me he wasn't an old man. All the stories of *hibakusha* that I heard had never been told by old people, but they have been told by young people. Their stories were told by young people in the room. Young people need to hear that story told by another young person. They might be in the body of an 80 year-old, but they're telling it as it was. The power of that is really important.

One of the projects I am involved in is called "Roots of Empathy." They take babies to schools. It is a wonderful project. The baby is taken by a local mother about a month old. The baby is just a bundle of crying and breast feeding, I guess. The baby is laid

down the floor and the classes will welcome the baby when they see the baby. Baby comes back at three months. “Oh the baby is now moving.” “Oh, wow,” the kids will say. That baby comes back at six months, now crawling. It is not just a bundle of yelling, it’s a person. It is a living growing person. The baby comes back at nine months. Now the baby is walking. The baby and the classroom, the reaction is so wonderful. The thing we are trying to do is, of course, this is to say, to teach the children what must happen with this baby. It mustn’t be dropped, it mustn’t be shaken. You’ve got no idea how many people throughout this planet shake their babies, and if they shake their babies, good-bye brain. This is one of the most important things we are doing in New Zealand, to recognize life and to recognize what a child is.

And in a way, it is the same story that we have heard today here about the preciousness of life, destroyed in seconds, the hideousness of war. Somehow, I am trying to translate it to now, so that children now can understand the tragedy of then. Because these kids today, your kids, my grandkids I got six kids, so I have to behave with all of this kind of things, and I got 200,000 kids that vote for me. I do not treat them like children, but I treat them as a family. I treat them, and I’m a servant leader, so I lead from behind, and showing them ideas that I think might work.

We have got another program against bullying, and the silly telephones stick to our ears. Kids have other techniques with those, to text message, to frightening people. It is as dangerous as anything we might have, and leads terrible things.

So, peace happens when we make it happen. Peace grows when we nurture it. That is what I do. That is what I have been doing for 50 years. I had never thought that I would come to Japan or that I would go to China and talk about peace when I was on those marches when I was 10 years old. I was like Mr. Uchida. I was bewildered by the world. And I thought those things happened.

Finally, why I am carrying this? I lit this today with the group of people from New Zealand. It is a torch. I lit it from the flame of Nagasaki that flame had come from Greece. I lit it and I put it out. But the wick is still with us here. I am going to light this again in New Zealand for the World March in October. So this flame from Nagasaki to New Zealand, the first country to see the new day, will start a March that goes around the world. So that is why I am carrying it. It is made by indigenous people of North America. The Maori people will decorate it, too. And we will start a

march, and I will look for the video so I can see you all here, so you will be on that march.

So, that is a little bit about my life and what I do, and how I think we have got to keep our stories going between Mr. Uchida, so he never dies. His story will keep going. And his tale will keep reminding us that once on a terrible day he got cut by glasses and he lost his family. He will still be in hearts in our mind. *Kia ora tatou.*

Lord Mayor Weil

Thank you very much for this impressive speech. Now I would like to ask the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain, His Excellency Dr. Khalil Hassan. Is he there? He was expected to make a speech. If he is not here, he will not have a chance to speak. It is an easy conclusion. So, ladies and gentlemen, now the floor is yours. Who wants to give their opinion to us all? Please. Would you like to use this microphone? And please tell us who you are, and where you come from, what are your circumstances of life.

Estifanos Afeworki Haile, Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan

Ladies and gentlemen, please kindly understand that I am addressing this important conference not only in my capacity as Ambassador of the State of Eritrea to Japan, but as a senior citizen and on behalf of the Mayors of the Capital City of my country, Asmara, Honorable Mr. Tewelde Kelati and the Port City of Massawa, Honorable Ms. Fana Tesfamariam, who joined Mayors of Peace in 2008.

First of all allow me to convey, from the mayors of these two cities, on the occasion of the 7th General Conference of Mayors for Peace, an earnest message of solidarity to the government and people of Japan and all the participants of this important conference which is being held on a period where unprecedented global anxiety on climate and nuclear issues has started emerging and is heightened.

I was born in a city called Asmara. It is the capital city of Eritrea, on September 1947. Though I was born in a very far off place and away from the epicenter of Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bombings, I still recollect from my childhood memories that the subsequent news, horrific photos, stories and fear which echoed from this tragedy hit deep into our souls, leaving scars which influenced the creation, upbringings and prevailing perspective of humanism that exists in my country today. Therefore, I

believe that I am duty bound and have an obligation to give testimonials and convey a humble message on behalf of the City of Asmara, the City of Massawa and my generation to this conference.

We all believe it is important to remember and reflect on the history of nuclear weapons even if it is brief in this important conference. Mankind needs to learn from mistakes of the past. I would like to share with the participants of this conference two historical facts that happened close to me and my people.

The first one was an atmospheric nuclear test explosion four times more powerful than the bomb dropped in Hiroshima which was made by France in the Sahara Desert of Africa in the morning of February 14, 1960. I clearly remember that this phenomenon was of great joy to the President of France of the time, Charles de Gaulle. But I can give testimonials to this conference that this event was a source of great sadness and sorrow to my neighborhood. Even though I cannot prove to you scientifically the linkages, I clearly do remember that this was a time of my childhood when strange sickness and a sense of weakness gripped our entire neighborhood. A mysterious disease spread like a prairie fire indiscriminately affecting children, elders, men and women in Africa. It left people bedridden for days and sometime weeks to come, in my city of Asmara. This is a city where every year from time immemorial the warm dust laden winds of the Sahara compete with the wet moisture laden winds from the Indian Ocean giving birth to rains. I think it is not hard to imagine what has happened during this particular period when nuclear dust also joined the competition. Seventeen consecutive atmospheric tests were undertaken by France and the damage left on the people, environment and eco-system by these are without any doubt horrendous. A continent which suffered the inhumane experience of the European shackles of slavery and colonialism was punished with a weapon of mass destruction silently once again in history.

The second one was during the cold war period: our Port City of Massawa and its environs were occupied by the Red Fleet of the Soviet Union from 1980–1990. The Dahlak Archipelago, in the Red Sea, was the location of a Soviet Navy base. USSR and its cold war ally in the region, Ethiopia, lost control of the Dahlak Archipelago and the Red Sea coast and the Islands to the Eritrean independence movement in 1990. The Port City of Massawa became nuclear free city after the heroic Battle of Fenkel was won by the Eritrean People's Liberation Army where Soviet Union sub-marines were

physically pushed out of the Dahlak Archipelago in 1990.

The City of Asmara and the City of Massawa have come of age under the threat of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and after every family member sacrificed one or more of its members to live in freedom. The last atomic survivors of Japan or the *hibakusha* and the war survivors of the City of Massawa had a meeting in the Port City of Massawa last October 10, 2008. It was in this meeting that the Mayor of Massawa, Mrs. Fana Tesfamariam, who herself was a survivor of this war, announced joining the Mayors for Peace movement. News footage showing the air raids on Massawa City in 1990 was screened, and youth from Massawa who had experienced the raids shared their own experiences with the *hibakusha*. The *hibakusha* prepared a display of various materials including photographs and remnants of clothing from the time of the atomic bombings – as their own Atomic Bomb Museum – and shared their testimonies of experiencing the bombings directly with the youth of Massawa.

Once again, it is a great honor and privilege for me to reaffirm to the participants of this conference, the continued commitment of the Mayors of the Cities of Asmara and Massawa to join ranks in the struggle to abolish nuclear and all kinds of weapons of mass destruction from our planet including and not excluding weapons of mass destruction, which was covered by, maybe I take attention of audiences here, the Mainichi Newspaper issue of March 25, 2008 by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea being built, assembled and stockpiled in Ethiopia in a place called Holmat Weaponry Factory, about 150 kilometers west of the capital city, Addis Abeba at present. If any of these weapons are used at present or in future in the region, history of Mussolini's act of genocide and barbarism, committed in the Second World War against the people of East Africa is repeating itself once again.

Honorable guests, ladies and gentleman,

Last but not least, let me conclude my statement with this note: US 44th President Mr. Obama's message on nuclear weapons issue is a welcome wind of change that should be embraced by all of us. Japan has taken over the chairmanship of the nuclear watchdog, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in 2009. We believe that these two factors shall give an opportune period to change course to sustainable development, climate change, abolition of nuclear weapons. Our traditional wisdom

and saying go as following: “Who, who attacked with a sword and wounded someone else can forget; but who, who was attacked with a sword and got wounded never forgets.” Thank you for listening.

Lord Mayor Weil

Your Excellency, thank you very much for your remarks. I think for all of us it was most interesting to hear from experiences you had in Africa. We know too little about politics and political affairs in Africa. And I want to thank you also to focus on some events from former years, which I think were forgotten in many countries. So I think it was a very proper speech you gave us, and I thank you for that.

Ladies and gentlemen, who will take the floor next? Are there any further remarks? I can wait for you, but I cannot force you. Okay, if there are no further remarks, let me try to summarize some points.

First of all, we can be very happy and we are very thankful for the report of Mr. Uchida, who gave us the best introduction for our discussion we can want for. Thank you very much once again, Mr. Uchida.

Secondly, I think we all agree that it is mostly important to have contacts with young people. It is absolutely necessary to have peace education in younger years. I want to thank you for your remarks and practical examples you gave from the discussion from different countries on how you deal with this point. For example, Robert Harvey talked about babies in schools, which is, from my point of view, a very interesting example and project. I will go back to Hannover, Germany and ask my experts whether we can do with this idea from New Zealand. Thank you very much once again for this.

There have been different examples, and I think I have not summarize all yet. I also want, finally, to repeat the hint of Robert Harvey about circumstances on which peace education has now to go on, because the main difference my youth and the youth of my son is in internet, electronic generation, with the network effect. We have a lot of war games but no peace games. We have a lot of violent videos but no peace videos, and so on. I think it is true in nearly every country. This is the point we have to discuss how we can do peace education under the circumstances of electronic revolution.

From my point of view, schools and kindergarten are more important than ever for that. From German experiences, you cannot let the families alone with youth issue. So I am sure this topic will be on the agenda of Mayors for Peace, not only on this General Conference, but also for our further efforts we have to do.

I want to thank you very much for your engagement, for your attendance, and for your speeches we have heard. Thank you very much for coming. Now I would like to close this session. Thank you very much and all the best for you for this day and all the days to come. Thank you very much.