

The 7th General Conference of Mayors for Peace

Section Meeting II

FUTURE STEPS FOR THE 2020 VISION CAMPAIGN

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Nagasaki Brick Hall (Meeting Room)

Chairperson: Luc Dehaene

Vice President of Mayors for Peace
Mayor of Ypres, Belgium

Lecture: “From Solferino to Hiroshima / Nagasaki”

Toshiki Mogami

Professor, International Christian University
Director, ICU Peace Research Institute

Speakers: Michel Cibot

Representative from Vice President City of Mayors for Peace
General Manager, City of Malakoff, France

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

Sean Morris

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Md. Azmat Ullah Khan

Mayor of Tongi, Bangladesh

Chairperson: Luc Dehaene, Mayor of Ypres

Ladies and gentlemen, may I ask you to be seated so that we can start this session?

Thank you for your attention, thank you for being with us here this afternoon. I feel a little bit like a teacher before a classroom. That is not a role I am used to, but I will try to do my best as Chairperson.

My name is Luc Dehaene. I am Mayor of Ypres, Belgium. I will be serving as the Chair for Section Meeting II of our Conference.

I would like to take advantage of my role for just half a minute to explain why the City of Ypres is especially involved in Mayors for Peace these days. Maybe some of you know that during World War I, Ypres was the center of hostilities. The whole population of Ypres was refugees during World War I. Everyone had to leave the city in 1915. Most of them went to France - Normandy, Brittany, neighboring Paris, and South of France - to Great Britain, a few to Holland, and most wealthy people went to Switzerland. So, all our citizens know about warfare.

Another reason is that for the first time in the history of warfare, chemical weapons were used in Ypres. It was mustard gas, later on named "Yperite" after the name of the City of Ypres. So, for that very particular reason, we are involved, and the citizens of Ypres are really involved in the Mayors for Peace movement.

So, ladies and gentlemen, in this Second Section Meeting, I would like to discuss our future activities, with regard to the promotion of our 2020 Vision Campaign, and preparation for the ultimate goal of the 2020 abolition of nuclear weapons.

First, however, we will have a brief lecture by Professor Toshiki Mogami of International Christian University. Professor Mogami is an expert in both international law and organizations operating in the international arena. He is currently a Professor at the International Christian University, as well as Director of the University's Peace Research Institute. From 1990 to 2001, he served as president of the Peace Studies Association of Japan. In addition, the professor has worked closely with Mayors for Peace in the past, participating and coordinating the 4th, 5th and the 6th General Conferences in 1997, 2001 and 2005, respectively. We are all looking forward to Professor Mogami's speech, as I am sure it will be very instructive. The title of the speech will be "From Solferino to Hiroshima/Nagasaki." Professor Mogami, please.

Lecture: “From Solferino to Hiroshima/Nagasaki”

Toshiki Mogami, Professor, International Christian University

Director, ICU Peace Research Institute

Thank you very much Mayor Dehaene for your kind introduction.

Distinguished guests and my colleagues, it is a privilege for me to speak in this important session on this memorable day.

Yesterday, I flew here from Tokyo. And the plane flew over Kokura, Kitakyushu City, about 30 minutes by plane from here. Then the plane flew southwest and then to deeper south, and then to Nagasaki. By taking this route, I kept feeling a bit strange, because this route was exactly the one that the bomber that dropped the bomb on Nagasaki took 64 years ago. So, I was kind of retracing the experience that the bomber had, although I did not experience what happened after 11:02.

Today, I will talk about the importance of international humanitarian law and that of NGOs, including cities.

One hundred fifty years ago, a fierce battle was fought in a town named Solferino in Italy. The battle was part of the Italian Unification War, and was fought between Austria on the one hand, and the allied force of Sardinia and France, on the other. It was a truly cruel and sanguinary war.

According to the record, about 300,000 soldiers from both sides fought for fifteen hours. Approximately 40,000 people died in a single battle on June 24 and the days that followed. Another 40,000 deaths were added in two months.

Now one man recorded the battle very precisely and scrupulously. His name is Henri Dunant, a Swiss, whom I assume that most of you know. Dunant was deeply shocked by the ghastliness of the war, and published the record in book form under the title “A Memory of Solferino.” Let me quote a few passages from this book; it may be a bit long:

“When the sun came up on the twenty-fifth (of June 1859), it disclosed the most dreadful sights imaginable. Bodies of men and horses covered the battlefield; corpses were strewn over roads, ditches, ravines, thickets and fields; the approaches of Solferino were literally thick with dead. The fields were devastated, wheat and

corn lying flat on the ground, fences broken, orchards ruined; here and there were pools of blood..."

"...Men of all nations lay side by side on the flagstone floors of the churches of Castiglione --- Frenchmen and Arabs, Germans and Slavs. Ranged for the time being close together inside the chapels, they no longer had the strength to move, or if they had there was no room for them to do so. Oaths, curses and cries such as no words can describe resounded from the vaulting of the sacred buildings. "Oh, Sir, I'm in such pain!" several of these poor fellows said to me, "they desert us, leave us to die miserably, and yet we fought so hard!" They could get no rest, although they were tired out and had not slept for nights. They called out in their distress for a doctor, and writhed in desperate convulsions that ended in tetanus and death."

Dunant goes on to say that:

"Humanity and civilization call imperiously for such an organization as is here suggested. It seems as if the matter is one of actual duty, and that in carrying it out the cooperation of every man of influence, and the good wishes at least of every decent person can be relied upon with assurance."

And by way of conclusion, Dunant adds that:

"In an age when we hear so much of progress and civilization, is it not a matter of urgency, since unhappily we cannot always avoid wars, to press forward in a human and truly civilized spirit the attempt to prevent, or at least to alleviate, the horrors of war?"

Now, the dreadful scenery that Dunant depicted reminds us of the infernal picture of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If the tragedy in Solferino was inhumane and anti-civilizational, as it actually was, the tragedies that visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki were no less inhumane and anti-civilizational. And if the horrors of Solferino were to be avoided, the horrors of Hiroshima/Nagasaki are all the more to be avoided. It is important to recognize that the legitimacy of the opposition to the tragedies of Hiroshima/Nagasaki originates from this experience in a small town of Solferino, 150 years ago.

Now, this Henri Dunant established with his friends a humanitarian organization in

1863, a committee which would later become the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This organization was meant to help the sick and wounded in battlefields.

What is important is that this new organization was what we call an "NGO" today, so that historically it had already existed for more than 150 years. And more importantly this NGO was going to change history, gradually but drastically. We should remember that citizens have often been the subjects, not merely the objects, of history.

As early as 1864, a Geneva Convention on the Protection of the Sick and Wounded (the First Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field) was concluded under the auspices of this forerunner of the ICRC. This was the very first treaty of this kind ever, which marked the beginning of international humanitarian law itself, although nobody at that time anticipated that this branch of law would flourish as much as today.

Its importance cannot be overestimated in the sense that from this treaty on, a new system of international law was born, which would state unambiguously that states are NOT free to do whatever they wanted to even during wars. The protection of victims was extended to prisoners of war and then to citizens, and the new system of law was rapidly developed.

Some people say, even today, that international law is useless and weak, but a part of it is solidly humanitarian and useful, which we have to remember. One expression of the enthusiasm of the humanity for international humanitarian law is what is called the St. Petersburg Declaration of 1868. Though almost a century and a half years old, this declaration is still new and fresh in its content, which reads in its preamble:

“That the only legitimate object which States should endeavour to accomplish during war is to weaken the military forces of the enemy;”

“That this object would be exceeded by the employment of arms which uselessly aggravate the sufferings of disabled men, or render their death inevitable;

That the employment of such arms would, therefore, be contrary to the laws of humanity;”

Thus, this declaration is still being turned to as one of the legal foundations on which to assert the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons. You have to make use of these

general principles as there exists no treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons as such.

Later on, the activities of the ICRC were intensified to enrich international humanitarian law, which resulted in the conclusion of the renowned four Geneva Conventions of 1949 for the protection of the victims of war. Of course the Red Cross as a whole has heavily been engaged in rescue missions in battlefield, but there has been much more in the normative field like this. Now it can be said that there is no humanitarian law, which is either elaborated or applied, without the participation, in one form or another, of the ICRC. ICRC is, thus, an indispensable NGO for the operation of the international legal system. International humanitarian law is one of the most significant branches of international law today, because wars continue in this world. And it should be remembered that this indispensable pillar started being constructed by an NGO.

What, then, is international humanitarian law? It will take a long, long time if I try to explain all its details, so I have to be content to give you a few essential points only. There are two fundamental principles of international humanitarian law:

- (1) You should not give unnecessary sufferings to your enemies, either combatants or civilians.
- (2) You should not attack civilians or civilian facilities.

Now, these principles are stipulated in several treaties, which I do not name today. But in short, they say that human beings ought to remain rational and humane at any time, even in the midst of war. It reminds us of the insightful aphorism written by Alain, a French philosopher. In his book "Mars, ou la guerre jugée" (in English: "Mars, or the judged war"), Alan said:

“The spirit of peace is the intelligence to understand that no force can obtain any status that resembles law. Yes, even when you beat others, do not throw away your reason with the shaken fist. Instead, try to think just, and search for the thoughts of others and understand them.”

Only those who can forget about this spirit can use the horrible weapons like nuclear weapons. It is a matter of imagination as well as reason.

Here I would like to emphasize that international humanitarian law is more than the collection of treaty articles, but includes this very spirit to be rational and humane at any

time. It can also be called a civilizational restraint which does not allow yourself to engage in anything you wish. In the world of law, there is no rule that says you can do anything in order to win, or that you can become a beast to beat others.

In a similar vein, we should also imprint on our minds the famous Martens Clause of 1907, which was part of a treaty on warfare. This was one of the first treaties that determined the conditions in which to fight wars in 1907. It reads that even if the prohibition of a particular weapon is not covered by treaties:

“...the inhabitants and the belligerents remain under the protection and the rule of the principles of the law of nations, as they result from the usages established among civilized peoples, from the laws of humanity, and the dictates of the public conscience.”

Here Dr. Martens talks about the protection by the laws of humanity and public conscience. Is it not moving? Whenever I read this passage, I myself am deeply moved and I find hope in the system of international humanitarian law. It relies on public conscience, and he said that law is governed by this public conscience.

This Martens Clause has been another basis on which to assert the illegality of nuclear weapons, in the lack of a particular treaty naming them.

As a matter of fact, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) naturally relied on the rules of international humanitarian law in its Advisory Opinion in 1996 on the illegality of the use or threat of nuclear weapons. Some people called this as the Advisory Opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons, but I do not do so. I think that it was the opinion judged on the illegality, not legality, of nuclear weapons. The ICJ was very clear that the use of nuclear weapons is, generally, contrary to international law.

In addition to the Court's opinion, Judge Weeramantry from Sri Lanka expounded in his Dissenting Opinion on the constraint dictated by “public conscience” in the following way.

After deciding that, “Hiroshima and Nagasaki thus do not prove the survivability of nuclear war,” he dwells eloquently on “public conscience” saying that:

“The incompatibility between “the dictates of public conscience” and the weapon appears starkly...”

And then he proposes several questions that may be addressed to the public conscience of the world, as typified by the average citizen in any country:

“Is it lawful for the purposes of war to induce cancers, keloid growths or leukemia in large numbers of the enemy population?

Is it lawful for the purposes of war to inflict congenital deformities and mental retardation on unborn children of the enemy population?

Is it lawful for the purposes of war to inflict any of the above types of damage on the population of countries that have nothing to do with the quarrel leading to the nuclear war?”

Of course his answer to these questions is flatly “No.” Just in passing, it is a pity that this Judge Weeramantry had to lose his position as a judge in the ICJ, because of this radicalness against nuclear weapons.

Now, having been encouraged by this judicial testimony of the public conscience of the humanity, let us take a look at another encouraging expression of political will. It is the determination of President Obama of the United States that was made public this last April.

In the speech in Prague he clearly stated “America’s commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons”. He also said that the United States had “a moral responsibility to act”. Now his determination appeared unfailing, by saying to those people who contend that nuclear weapons are destined to proliferate that:

“Such fatalism is a deadly adversary, for if we believe that the spread of nuclear weapons is inevitable, then in some way we are admitting to ourselves that the use of nuclear weapons is inevitable.”

This is a powerful and hopeful statement. A British newspaper, The Independent, wrote rather sarcastically at the beginning, that:

“The speech began with almost Disneyesque staging as the President and Mrs. Obama climbed hand-in-hand on to the outdoor stage to string music, the skyline of Prague’s domes and spires behind them and a thick bank of carnations and roses at their feet. But the message the President offered was grave and weighted with unexpected new urgency by the firing overnight of another ballistic missile by North Korea.”

This speech is not only spiritually encouraging, but also politically most realistic in the sense that nuclear disarmament is unimaginable until and unless the nuclear powers take action, even unilaterally. Either the U.S. or Russia had to do this, if ever there was to be a beginning.

This possibility was theoretically advocated by peace researchers in the 1980s as a “unilateral nuclear disarmament initiative,” meaning that one nuclear power starts reducing its nuclear arsenal, while inviting other nuclear states to follow suit. In those days in the 1980s this advocacy was ridiculed as fantasy, especially by the so-called realists. They said that nuclear deterrence was most reliable and rational, and that any reduction of nuclear weapons would be insane. However, once a nuclear superpower decides to act along this line, then it is no longer a vain idealism. It is what President Obama has shown, and will have to prove.

Another encouraging aspect is the reaction to this presidential statement by the US Conference of Mayors, which adopted a resolution in July in support of this avowed policy. Please forgive me to name only one delegation among yours. It seems pertinent at this juncture.

The resolution was not only supportive of the presidential policy. No less important was the title of the resolution which was “Affirming the Role of Cities in Achievement of a Peaceful World Free of Nuclear Weapons by 2020.” Yes, this is a civic manifesto for a nuclear free world. The Resolution called upon “the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament” (ICNND), established last year, to “recognize the importance of city and citizen level movements for the abolition of nuclear weapons.” This precisely hits the mark.

The ban on anti-personnel landmines, or the Ottawa Process, was promoted by citizens. The ban on cluster munitions, the so-called Oslo Process, was promoted also by citizens. Then it is a mystery that we lack the same movement as regards nuclear weapons. There has to be something similar, if such a process is most promising for success, and there can be.

The reason why no such process has gained momentum with nuclear weapons was that it was deemed unlikely that nuclear-weapon states would join such a process. Now

this explanation is becoming invalid. So we have a hope now, and let us not escape from this hope. If the past experiences have been successful, we should have a similar process for nuclear weapons, as well.

If a new process is to start, it seems that the process has to be named with a term which begins with “O,” following suit to Ottawa and Oslo. One example could be the Obama Process, but it may not be appropriate to borrow a specific country’s president’s name, since civic movements have to be neutral and universal. If so, let us think of something else. Whatever it may be, the cardinal point is the recognition that it is citizens and cities that can play an essential role in nuclear disarmament, as in eliminating other inhumane weapons. It is never a fantasy, but a historical necessity.

Finally I would like to say a few words about the new multilateralism as a new mode of international relations. Those who think of international relations solely in terms of relations between sovereign states and ministries of foreign affairs, and intergovernmental organizations, like the UN, are misunderstanding the reality of the present world. Rather, it is made up of not only sovereign states and intergovernmental organizations, but also individuals, NGOs and cities. In other words, the running of the world has become much more multilateral in a true sense of the term compared to a century ago, or even a decade ago.

Here, cities have much in common with NGOs, although cities, unlike NGOs, have to take into consideration more difference of views than NGOs. Yet, like NGOs, cities can be different from the central government, and can have a broader constituency than the central government if they get united trans-nationally.

If 3,000 cities of the world cry out that “Cities Are Not Targets!” and that “therefore nuclear weapons have to be abolished,” then history cannot keep ignoring this legitimate claim.

It is exactly what happened in human history after Solferino. Qualitatively, the distance between what happened in Solferino and what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki is quite short, almost null, nothing. At the same time, the distance has been very long as a learning process and process of action.

But now there are many, many more Henry Dunants in the world, and a post-Solferino process is being deployed more extensively, in many quarters of the world. And, as long as this process endures, the future will be much brighter than people usually think. Ours is an age of citizens and cities, and the possibility and responsibility of cities are just significant. Let us not escape from this hope and challenge.

Also, let us confirm finally that the use of nuclear weapons is a form of instantaneous genocide. Citizens and cities are under solemn obligation to prevent this genocide, as other forms of genocide. Nobody, except for a few fanatic people, endorses genocide. Yet, the same people may endorse the use of nuclear weapons for the unverifiable reason that it is the surest way of securing national security. This is strange. If you deny genocide, then you are compelled to deny the use of nuclear weapons, too, for it inevitably leads to genocide.

Now the task before us is how to overcome barbarism, which has been justified for centuries as a politically rational choice. It is not. It is in no way rational. There has to be no such thing as realism which is also inhumane, as it cannot enjoy legitimacy in the long run.

What we will ask in the end is the choice to be humane. Let us make of the 21st Century the century without genocide. Thank you very much.

Mayor Dehaene

So, thank you very much Professor Mogami for your hopeful and at the same time very realistic words. And you are right. Besides the hundreds of Dunants in this world, nowadays we have Mayor Akiba and 3,000 of his colleagues around the world. And in the near future, we hope to be more than 5,000 next year.

Ladies and gentlemen, the professor has been kind to stay a while longer with us, please take this opportunity to ask some questions and get a more detailed explanation about his wonderful speech. More than ever, Professor, we were convinced that it is our role and it is our duty as Mayors for Peace to go on with our work to intensify all of our activities to reach our goal, the abolition of all nuclear weapons by 2020.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is time now for your questions. I know it is always difficult

to ask the first question. Please feel free. Michel, please.

Michel Cibot, General Manager, City of Malakoff, France

Thank you very much for your presentation. It was a very interesting lecture. What most interests me is the relationship between genocide and weapons, and its meaning for us. We have to raise a voice to question this. Because currently, genocide is intentionally carried out or implemented. What impact would it have on humanity, when someone has the power to do so? In our society, many causes such as terrorism, drugs, or weapons have eventually led to many lives lost in the world. Do we always have the intention to cause genocide? That is my concern. So I would like your comment on that, regarding the intention of human beings to cause genocide.

Professor Mogami

This is a very deep philosophical question, and we have to keep asking this question incessantly. Somehow, the use of nuclear weapons has never been regarded as a form of genocide. Strangely enough, these two things have been separated for a long time. I find the use of nuclear weapons to be a kind of genocide, although the form may be different from the experiences in Auschwitz, but the result can be similar. Only in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, 200,000 people died quite instantly. And this can be two million, anywhere, anytime. So it is equal to genocide.

The change in history after World War II is that now many more acts are being called genocide. Even if the number of victims is 3,000 or 7,000, people have started calling this genocide, if the means of killing is cruel enough, and it is irrevocable. So there is no question in calling the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and future incidents similar to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, genocide. So I think we should approach this problem from this new angle. This is a philosophical question as well as a legal one, but it is very important.

Alain Rouy, Councilor of Villejuif City, France

My name is Alain Rouy from Villejuif, France. A German philosopher has related the Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Auschwitz, and the name of that philosopher is Günther Anders. In Germany, he is regarded as a nuclear philosopher. He wrote various papers, and visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki. He has published many writings. He exchanged communications with a pilot in the United States. One of the actual pilots of the bomber group that bombed Hiroshima communicated with that philosopher, and

he wrote a book about the relationship between Auschwitz and Hiroshima- Nagasaki. So, similar things were created to the conscience of human beings. His name is Günther Anders.

Professor Mogami

Thank you very much. As you mentioned, it is significant that there was someone who established the relationship with the notion of the nuclear weapons. Even where nuclear weapons were not used, many actions have been called genocide. I said a few moments ago, citing the number of 7,000. This was the number of people killed in Srebrenica of former Yugoslavia. Several thousands of civilians were killed without defense in the domestic war, and this has been called genocide.

You can say the number is so small. The number does not matter. But, as you said, this is a matter of conscience. It shocked the conscience of the entire humanity. As long as the conscience is shocked deeply, we can call it genocide. Even if the number is 10 or 20, it can be genocide. Thank you very much for your indication.

George Regan, Baillie (Councilor), Dundee, UK

Thank you Chairman. I am George Regan, Chair of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities. Professor, on listening to your very interesting lecture and accepting what you see I wonder whether the time has come now, where the term “weapons of mass destruction”, the word “destruction” is non-personal and non-specific, should now be referred to as, “weapons of mass genocide” directing the terminology then at the eradication of human beings, rather than property on land.

Professor Mogami

Yes, that may be a good proposal. We have been using the term “weapons of mass destruction”, but it may not be enough. The use of the term “weapons of mass genocide” would be to shock, once again, the conscience of mankind, of the human race. Well, it is not our purpose to keep shocking others, but it is necessary to ask the people to grasp the essence of the phenomenon. So, in that sense, I welcome your proposal. Thank you.

Mayor Dehaene

OK, please.

Maria-Teresa Felix, Cultural Attache

Embassy of the Republic of Angola in Japan

Thank you so much. My name is Maria-Teresa Felix, from the Embassy of Angola. I would like to ask Professor Mogami to give us a kind of word of comfort. Is there, within international law, enough rules to punish people causing such disturbing consequences on another people's lives? I have had a chance to watch on TV some interesting people being judged by international court, and I feel that they looked very happy, everyone around looks happy, we do not feel enough punishment for such huge criminality. Somehow I feel that people holding nuclear weapons would feel happy when they decide to drop one bomb in a certain place, if nothing will happen to them. Thank you so much.

Professor Mogami

Thank you very much. Yes, a difficult question as well. There are many war criminals, the people who committed crimes against humanity or even some who committed genocide, and many of them are still at large. And an increasing number of courts are being created in the world including the International Criminal Court in The Hague. This court can judge some of those people who committed those crimes. But that is not enough because the states have to be parties to the treaty in order to have their war criminals judged in this court. So some countries decided to judge those criminals by themselves, including most prominently, Belgium. This happened in 1993. They authorized their court to judge those criminals wherever their crimes had taken place, to bring them to the Belgian court and try them in Belgium.

This was successful to some extent, but to some countries this was a problematic action, because now anybody can be brought to Belgium and tried there, even when the crime has nothing to do with Belgium. So some countries, including the United States and Israel, harbor great fear about this. Thus, there was strong pressure on Belgium, and Belgium had to revise this legislation a few years ago. But there remain some countries like Spain, Germany or United Kingdom that can do the same thing.

So there may be some hope. Yet this is an unstable method. It is not enough to rely on a courageous country like Belgium to do all this. In that sense, it would be more desirable to establish a universal world-wide system in which those heinous crimes can be charged.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you. Those words were for a small country, but the international community was not happy with that. (laughter)

If there are no further questions, then I thank Professor Mogami for a wonderful speech. Thank you very, very much. So ladies and gentlemen, we have a short break. If everybody agrees, we will restart at 3:15 exactly. Thank you.

[Break]

Mayor Dehaene

Ladies and gentlemen, we promised to start at 3:15, but we are a couple of minutes behind. There are five persons who were making an address to the meeting.

Michel Cibot

After Professor Mogami's Talk, it is very difficult to do so because it was a very excellent presentation given by Professor Mogami, and I would like to thank him. Post Solferino is my main topic. It is about how we can promote our activities so that we can reach denuclearization. With that, we have the 2020 Vision. At the year 2020, we have to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Mayors for Peace started the 2020 Vision campaign, and there is another networking for the campaign led by the Mayor of Ypres, who is here next to me.

Malakoff is very close to Paris. Our city was named after the Crimean War. At that time, France was already involved in the war and Napoleon was taking leadership. France does have nuclear weapons, and because of that, we have a very complicated situation. However, we are opposed to nuclear weapons, and we are participating in the 2020 Vision.

I would like to talk about organizations and the various methods to take, so we can promote the 2020 Vision. These include contact information, and how we can communicate and relate to sister and friendship cities.

Of course, governmental activities and citizens' activities are very important. We do have international organizations, too. In France, we have organized an association at the national level. This 2020 Vision is promoted by cities. The

messages of *hibakusha*, survivors of the A-Bomb, must be conveyed through this 2020 Vision Campaign.

It is necessary for us to have technical tools, not only in France but also in other countries. What is important is that the instruments and materials for France be written down in French. It is important for us to have them available in French. That is the only way we can promote activities in France domestically.

What is clear to us is that we are making steps forward and we have an increasing number of cities participating in Mayors for Peace, so that they can join the activities of 2020 Vision. Another point is that the activities are at the city level so we can collaborate and share the information. By doing so, we can improve ourselves.

As Professor Mogami indicated, the relationship between genocide and nuclear weapons must be discussed. Also, the relationship between sustainable development and nuclear weapons has to be considered.

Günther Anders, a German philosopher, was introduced. His philosophy is a good base. In partnership, I think his idea is very important. We are trying to communicate our messages to schools, NGOs, various communities, etc. to organize ourselves. Opinion exchanges are very important, and we are emphasizing that. The cities are emphasizing such activities, too, so we can exchange opinions about denuclearization, or a nuclear-free society.

As discussed yesterday, the Secretariat of Mayors for Peace should come up with a certain structure, so various cities can get together to form an organization, for example, the cities in the Mediterranean region.

We hope to have 5,000 cities participating, and in order to achieve the goal and in order for them to be able to participate, we have to have a lot of means to communicate with them, and we have to have a certain organization. I would like you to focus and collaborate so we can come up with a certain system and organization. Thank you.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you. The second speaker is Mr. Sean Morris. Mr. Morris does policy research in Manchester.

Sean Morris, Principal Policy and Research Officer, Manchester City, UK
The UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities (NFLA)

I am very proud and honored to be here today. I was very impressed by the Ceremony today. I am wearing my Nagasaki tie today, which was given to me by Mayor Ito. It is a very tragic possession, so it is a really great honor to be in this city today.

As Mr. Dehaene said, my name is Sean Morris and I am a representative from Manchester City Council, which is very proud to be a Vice President of Mayors for Peace. I am also the Secretary of the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities and the Secretary of the UK Mayors for Peace Group.

I have been involved with Mayors for Peace for about 10 years now and have been highly impressed with the expansion of the movement. In 1999 I was working for Leeds City Council, which is about 20 kilometers from Manchester and joined the Mayors for Peace in 1999 when its main museum hosted a Hiroshima A-bomb exhibition. From then on I have been highly committed to this organization, which I think brings out the very best in humanity – the belief that all human life is sacred, that nuclear weapons are a real and present danger to humanity and only by working together, nationally and internationally, can we work for their eventual elimination. And I believe cities are quite a focal point of that.

I have been the UK and Ireland Secretary of the Nuclear Free Local Authorities for just 8 months and have become acquainted with considering how to develop the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision in the UK and Ireland. In the UK and Ireland that is perhaps a bigger challenge than for most countries. Apart from a few obvious examples like London, we do not have elected Mayors with executive power. On the whole our Mayors and Lord Mayors are really figureheads – they open shopping centres, or have dinner with important people or provide the opening speech to the presentation of a new event. They expressly do not make political decisions and are expected to remain politically neutral during their term of office, which is usually only for a year.

Therefore, how in the UK and Ireland do we get Mayors involved in the 2020 Vision Campaign to be involved in a major coalition to eliminate nuclear weapons by 2020 when they have no political role? Our strategy for the coming year is to use the Mayors position as figureheads of their town and cities to hold events where their

visibility will be a benefit.

So, for example, for the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference preparations, we are looking at holding a memorial peace lecture named after our founder, Councillor Bill Risby of Manchester, who would have probably spoken today, but unfortunately he died in February. In his memory, we are very much honored to have a nuclear free movement in the UK.

We are looking at high profile events over the coming year, including the lectures and receptions, where we get high profile speakers; mayors and also political leaders, because the political leaders of our councils are key to the decisions and key political decisions, so get them together. We are looking at high profile names; the biggest name we got so far coming to mind is Michael Douglas, the actor. He was at the events in New York in May. He is a well-known anti-nuclear activist and has a South Wales connection, so we hope to use the Welsh nuclear free organizations to get connected to him. If you have any suggestions for high profile names, please come to me after the meeting.

With this in mind, the UK Mayors for Peace group is looking to meet the UK's representative to the NPT Conference, along with other like-minded NGOs, to put forward our views and seek to ensure we are clear with the UK government's policy for the conference. In this, we have been greatly assisted by the recent publication of the UK government's 'Road to 2010' document, which states a firm commitment to be positively engaged in disarmament talks on the international stage. We do not agree with every aspect of this document, particularly the desire to spread civilian nuclear power, but we are keen to ensure the strong and positive statements made by Prime Minister Gordon Brown on nuclear proliferation are adhered to.

I think another key aspect of taking forward the 2020 Vision is educating our towns and cities about the importance of developing a culture of peace. One of the achievements I am most proud of is the creation of a peace tree and plaque in the Central Park of Leeds dedicated to all the innocent civilians killed in warfare since the A-bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This was dedicated by Mayor Akiba and Mayor Itoh in 2003. Since then, we have held Annual Peace Lectures and Annual Hiroshima and Nagasaki commemorations in Leeds and Manchester.

Indeed, probably around this time, in Leeds and Manchester, they will be doing the events we did this morning, given the time difference. We brought to Manchester and Leeds various high profile speakers and peacemakers, former US Senator George Mitchell involved in Palestinian peace talks, Shakespearean actor and Star Trek Captain Jean-Luc Picard, Patrick Stewart, whose major involvement is with Amnesty International, and Nobel Peace Laureate John Hume from Northern Ireland Peace Process. We are also involved in developing many education and skill development and we hold city receptions to high profile peacemakers, such as Rajmohan Gandhi, in order to bring together large number of people, like-minded people, to hear about peace.

We think that, by showing that our cities are linked with our civilian populations to promote peace, we can start to build a coalition of support for a culture of a nuclear-free world.

By being here today, Manchester is also showing solidarity with Hiroshima, Nagasaki and all towns, cities and peoples dedicated to making a difference and changing the world. As Mayor Akiba said, we are in the ‘Obamajority’ and over the next year and onwards we should use such good will to encourage our civilian populations to work for peace. Manchester is very proud to claim to be the world’s first nuclear-free zone – it has a big red plaque on the front door of its Town Hall saying so. Manchester has an annual Peace Week and councils with far more peace policy. It has large peace gatherings and hosts now both the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities and is the UK base for Mayors for Peace. We firmly believe that we are the city for peace and that is what all Mayors for Peace members seek today. Next year is the 30th anniversary of our nuclear free declaration and we will be promoting what that means to Councils and to the public with a series of events across the area.

We believe that by showing the leadership and by working together with our civilian community and NGOs in these past 30 years we have achieved a surprising amount and made a major difference. Now over the next 10 years let’s finish the job of creating that fantastic inspiration of a nuclear-free world by 2020.

Manchester offers its services to the Mayors for Peace, and honored to be a part of that movement. Thank you very much.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you, thank you, thank you Mr. Morris. Our third speaker is, Ms. Sonia Guenine de Vitry-Sur-Seine.

Sonia Guenine, Deputy Mayor, Vitry-Sur-Seine, France

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

Ladies and gentlemen, my colleagues, I think that each of our cities is inclined to deal with the issue of peace culture throughout the whole year. It is necessary for us to participate in the 2020 Vision Campaign as a part of our efforts for peace culture. From the everyday realities of our citizens, the current situation of their living conditions has been deteriorating. France, for example, is the fourth largest nuclear-weapon state, with a budget of almost 40 billion euro and is contributing to the war in Afghanistan.

We are paying a lot of money for the arms race and war, the reintegration of our country in the military command of NATO, which is not moving in the right direction. We are moving from the logic of peacekeeping to a war against peoples. If there is a war, death is unavoidable not only for the military personnel but also for citizens, because cities remain standing targets in the war operations. It is necessary for us to participate in a peaceful society.

In France, fortunately, there is no more war, and finally the French government approved a legislation to compensate victims of nuclear tests in the Sahara Desert and the Mururoa Atoll. There were 30,000 people exposed to radiation in 1960 at Reggane, Algeria. They were the first victims of France's nuclear tests. Since then nuclear tests were conducted 210 times. Tenacious peace movements for nuclear abolition and for compliance with the NPT have been carried out. As a result of that, the victims are now getting support.

We have to share the experiences of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Reggane and the Mururoa Atoll with others. As such, on the International Day of Peace in September, we have to agree to that point. It is a very good opportunity to unite the efforts we make in our cities, our countries, to connect to the 2020 Vision Campaign at all stages of awareness and mobilization of citizens. For the 2020 Vision, we have to take actions in order to show our initiatives. In Vitry, we are doing the following, and many activities are held regularly:

Taking various initiatives, having partnership with schools, recreation centers, etc., providing exhibitions, movies, promotion of sister city relationships as well as cooperation and co-development of the cities and communities, and supporting civil associations. They represent the tools of the culture of peace, understanding, mutual respect between peoples, between cities.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki should not be repeated any more. The experiences of massacre, localized destruction and exposure to radiation at the Sahara Desert should be shared with others. We have started to accumulate information about a peaceful society, which should become a vector for peaceful societies.

Local destruction has to be avoided, and that is why we have to take action. No action is trivial in this great struggle for peace, against the weapons of mass destruction or surgical strikes. Nuclear weapons should be banned from the planet. Thank you very much.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you very much. Next, Mr. Aaron Tovish, Executive Advisor for the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation. Please Mr. Tovish.

Aaron Tovish, Campaign Director, Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Executive Advisor, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation

Good afternoon. In addition to my capacity as an Executive Advisor to the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, my assignment is the Director of the 2020 Vision Campaign. The purpose of my intervention today is to give you the background information on the Campaign and its role in Mayors for Peace, and some of the perspectives on where we are headed in the coming years and decades.

Mayors for Peace is rather an old organization. As you have noticed, this is the 7th General Conference and it occurs every four years. The first four General Conferences were done by invitations sent out, mayors coming to Hiroshima and Nagasaki for several days, being exposed to the horrors of what had happened in 1945 through visits to the museums and the contacts with survivors, then they went home and nothing happened for four years. Then they or others would come back again, be exposed to

the horrors, and go home and nothing would happen for four years.

But the change occurred when Mayor Akiba was elected Mayor of Hiroshima and saw in this organization the potential to have much more happening on a more sustained basis. And this began the transformation of the organization. At its 5th General Conference in 2001, an action plan was adopted for the first time. An idea that cities would be actually active and focused and united in their activities globally to sustain the motivation they received during the General Conference.

The fact was not a lot of things happened in terms of the follow-up to the action plan and at the same time, the world situation was deteriorating badly. There were some very low points, the treaties were being abrogated, and still the treaty hadn't been entered into force, and so on.

And in May of 2003, Mayor Akiba took the initiative by proposing an emergency campaign. The 6th Executive Conference, which met in Manchester that year, accepted that proposal, and at the meeting in Manchester, the date 2020 was first settled upon.

It had of course a symbolic value, 75th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and 50th anniversary of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. But also there was technical thinking behind it. In fact, given the rate at which the nuclear-weapon states are capable of dismantling nuclear weapons, it was absolutely technically feasible to eliminate all nuclear weapons by that year. So why not?

The Campaign was launched in Nagasaki, I believe at the second Global Citizens' Assembly, and went public. So, now, we are in the sixth year of the Campaign. It has been a privilege for me to work on this for six years.

At the 6th General Conference in 2005, the Campaign was officially embraced by the organization, because the initial commitment was from the Executive Conference, and the whole General Conference supported the Campaign. One of the strong messages coming from the cities was that the Campaign needs its own international secretariat. That was when Mayor Dehaene and the City of Ypres stepped forward and offered to have an international secretariat housed in the city hall and helped with the staffing for that. In 2006, Mayor Akiba visited Ypres and officially opened the office, which has

been functioning ever since.

Finally, the idea was for that office to receive support internationally, in terms of financial contributions, because the Campaign was getting too big just for Hiroshima and Nagasaki to support. They needed to establish an actual association under Belgian Law to operate this office in Belgium.

So at the Executive Conference meeting in Florence in 2007, the Executive Conference authorized the Campaign to collect money internationally. It had already been collecting money in Belgium, and it formally founded the Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Association under Belgian Law.

The Campaign now operates under that framework within Belgium but the structure of the Campaign Association is such that only members of the Executive Conference of Mayors for Peace can be members of the Association. So the Association's leadership is, in a sense, a sub-committee of the Executive Committee of Mayors for Peace, and is directly under control, ultimately, of this General Conference, or the membership of Mayors for Peace as a whole.

However, there have been some recent amendments to the Statutes of the Association, which have been approved by the 2020 Vision Campaign Association General and Board of Directors meetings, and reflected in the Action Plan. The change is that the membership is allowed to expand to include associate members. They do not have voting rights, but they can be actively, directly involved in the work of the campaign. This will allow us to bring in an even larger number of cities from more areas so they can get experience in working with the Executive Committee members on the Campaign directly. We see this as a great opportunity to increase our contact and communication with key cities throughout the world, not just the 15 member cities of the Executive Conference.

So, I see there is an opportunity here. The campaign has been going for seven years now, so it has a strong structural base and now has the basis for raising funds. There are over 100 cities contributing to the organization now, and we are hopeful that that number, like the membership of the organization, will be growing rapidly.

Those mayors who are here, and who will be, of course, sending out forms, if you have

any ideas, suggestions, criticisms, complaints, etc., please direct them to our office in Ypres. If it is about the Campaign, we will try to take on your ideas, answer your criticisms, and make the campaign stronger and better between the meetings of Executive Committee, and of course between the meetings of General Conferences.

I should mention that the Board Meeting of the Campaign Association chaired by Mr. Dehaene meets every six months and the General Meeting will occur every year, as required under the Belgian Law. So this is a very intensive working operation.

Now I would like to talk briefly about the evolution of the Campaign. In its more recent manifestation, many of the mayors here and almost 1,000 mayors worldwide have signed a document called the Cities Appeal in support of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol. This is a great accomplishment. I know of no other petition in the history of the world that has had so many city mayors signing it.

But what we were finding was that the question we often got is, “If you have 3,000 mayors, why did you get only 1,000 of them to sign it?” We realized that we are in a losing position. Our membership is growing so fast that it is almost impossible for the signature campaign to keep up with it.

So the title of this Conference and the Action Plan that was adopted yesterday by the Conference has basically said that Mayors for Peace as an organization is behind the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol, all of the organization.

We are going to focus our work on the membership, no longer chasing after them for signatures. At least in building up the organization, we are focusing on going to after them for contributions, because we have an ambitious program, which was adopted last year, but it will be very, very difficult to carry that program out without a serious financial base to work from, an enlarged secretariat staff, and a broader network of contacts internationally.

The external focus will be the recruitment of 2,000 new members in the next eight months. This will be absolutely unprecedented in the history of cities. Our record for a single year was, correct me if I am wrong, 900 new members? Not even that many? 600! (*Note: The record of largest increase in a year was 601 cities in 2005)

So, we are taking on an incredible challenge here. It is going to require a focus and determination to reach out to fellow municipalities, leaders, NGOs, etc. to get everybody working together. We must find new methods and make new inroads through new contacts to get not twice as many members as we normally do in that period, but three or four times as many members. We have cities joining at the rate of two or three cities a day. Every time I open my e-mail, every morning, there is a new city that has just joined, two new cities or three new cities.

There is a new city coming in everyday. If we are going to get 2,000 new member cities by May, I have not done my calculation exactly, but probably more like eight or nine new members everyday from all over the world. It is a great task, but a wonderful challenge, and I think we can do it. In terms of financial growth, however, we need to see that growth continue right through to May 2010. Campaign has accomplished a great deal in six years. It is very hard to know how much credit to take for the fact that just about everybody and not just President Obama but many different individuals around the world, prominent or otherwise, are now talking about the vision of a nuclear-free world.

When we started the Campaign, nobody was talking about it. People who had been talking about it were exhausted, and those who had not thought about it, did not have that idea enter their heads. It is now everywhere you look. But the 2020 part of it, we still have a way to go on. This is a real challenge, because the vision can serve for many purposes. But if that is to be realized, people have to commit themselves to work on a sustained and focused manner to achieve the result at the time ascertained. Otherwise, they will just kind of waffling and mucking the way forward. This is a challenge that requires focus and determination and nothing concentrates the mind more than a deadline.

So our challenge leading up to the NPT Review Conference next year is to get people to appreciate the importance of accepting the deadline. And I was so pleased to hear that the President of the General Assembly articulated and supported that so strongly in front of the whole world this morning. And he is not the only one. We are getting support from many different quarters for this now.

In the Action Plan, we are developing plans to build a momentum into the NPT Review Conference and we are also developing plans for the disarmament decade.

Because the NPT Review Conference may be the beginning of what we are really hoping for. And that will be terrific. But even if it is, starting the process does not guarantee the process completion. We are going to need 10 years of hard work. We have the English expression of bird-dogging the process, that is, staying after it, criticizing it, finding out where the weak links are, finding out who is dragging their feet, going after them and not letting anything slow down the process of achieving our goal by 2020.

We have a plan that literally starts from next month. Mayor Akiba was invited to deliver keynote speech in Mexico City at the 62nd annual meeting of the Department of Public Information of United Nations, where they bring together NGOs from all over the world. That conference, we are hoping and expecting, will endorse a united work of all kinds of NGOs toward the successful Decade for Disarmament, which the UN is in the process of declaring. We will then be going to the UN Disarmament Commission, which is drafting that declaration, and the UN General Assembly, which will be adopting it. The best way to make that Decade successful will be a successful NPT Review Conference.

So, all of these are converging. We need the involvement of each and every city, the members of Mayors for Peace. We need the involvement of cities that are not yet members of Mayors for Peace, but will be by May.

I hope you will all leave here knowing that the Secretariat in Ypres Belgium is there to help you contribute to this Campaign, so that all of our efforts will synergize into a very powerful force, one that other groups can look to for leadership and inspiration, and also for cooperation and partnership. Thank you very much.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you, Aaron, for beautifully supporting us. The last speaker on my list is Mr. Pol D'Huyvetter. Pol, please.

Pol D'Huyvetter

International Secretariat Staff, Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign
Executive Advisor, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation

Good afternoon. I am very happy to be here with all of you. It is an honor and

privilege to work on this campaign. I am the Director of the International Campaign Secretariat based in Ypres, and I am also the Executive Advisor for the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation.

I first met Mayor Akiba in 2003 at the NPT PrepCom in Geneva, and I must say ever since that first speech, I was very inspired. It made me go back to Belgium and to start working with mayors. It has been a very inspirational journey. His leadership is very important to our network and I look forward to working with him and with all of you toward the 2020 Vision.

I would also like to thank Mayor Luc Dehaene, and Mr. Filip Deheegher, the treasurer, who is here, for also doing a lot of hard work. I think it has been said how much it was a challenge. And finally I would like to thank the staff of the Mayors for Peace offices in Hiroshima and Ypres, because I know how much we are under-staffed, we have so much work to do with only a little funds, so I would like to acknowledge that here in this introduction.

I was also very inspired by Professor Mogami, especially about the link between Auschwitz and Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The first time I read about that link was in an article by Dr. David Krieger of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists. I was shaken to see that today in Belgium we have, for example, 20 US nuclear weapons and to realize that these weapons, and more than 20,000 of them on this planet today, are dormant mobile incinerators. This is not only immoral but it is also illegal.

Dr. Krieger continued that under the Nuremberg principles, it is not only our right but also our duty to do everything that we can to stop another Hiroshima or Nagasaki from happening. I joined Mayors for Peace and the 2020 Vision Campaign because I believe that it's the best organization for achieving our goals, in particular because it was setting a deadline. It is ambitious, but realistic. Thank you, Aaron, for clarifying the structure.

What I would like to focus briefly on during this intervention is this ambitious goal, at the same time, we see that it is a very appealing one, as our membership has tripled since the last General Conference, which was held four years ago in Hiroshima. We are now talking about 5,000 members by the NPT Review Conference in New York,

which I believe to be, again, ambitious but realistic if we all work together.

Let me give you an example. As I said, I come from Belgium. I have been working a lot in Belgium with Mayors for Peace ever since I heard Mayor Akiba's speech in 2003. At that time, there were six member cities in Belgium. I was working for an NGO called Friends of the Earth. So when I came back to Belgium, I checked the website and wrote a letter to the six members, and I was very fortunate that the Mayor of Ypres replied. This was the start of cooperation between an NGO and a local authority.

And it soon evolved in 2005, when we set up a strategy of having cross-party letters, signed by mayors from different democratic political parties, sent to all the Belgian mayors, which resulted in 250 Belgian members in 2005, which is almost half of the 589 cities in Belgium. We have continued that strategy, and I mention it here because it has been used in other countries very successfully. Today Belgium has 337 members, which is 57% of all Belgium mayors. I want to challenge other people in this room to beat us. Go out there and work. The cross-party letter is a very good tool. We have seen that in Germany, Luxemburg and other places.

Now I also want to go back to Belgium for another need that has been mentioned several times. If you want us to work in as humane a manner as possible, we need more funds. Here again, Belgium has shown an example of leadership through approaching mayors through cross-party letters. I hope that the mayors who are here will also take the initiative to bring in funds so that we can have more staff to help reach the ambitious goal we have set for ourselves. As Mayor Dehaene has mentioned before, if every member city would donate just 100 euro, we would be able to run a proper campaign. So, we hope that you will take home this message.

As a political goal, we have the capacity to build up the influence we need within the UN. Here again, I will give Belgium as an example. When we had major newspapers reporting that cross-party groups of mayors visited the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this all led to a Resolution in the Belgian parliament. Last January, the Belgian Senate approved a Resolution in support of the 2020 Vision Campaign.

Just to clarify, Belgium is quite conservative when it comes to nuclear disarmament.

Not only do we have 20 US nuclear weapons, we also have a NATO Headquarters, and the supreme military headquarters in Belgium as well. So, mayors and cities have offered a lot of leverage to talk with national leaders, and I believe that this is what Professor Mogami was referring to when he mentioned how NGOs and local authorities can bring international dynamics towards the 2020 Vision Campaign.

I will end by referring to a document that I want to present here to you today. It is a progress report for 2009 of the 2020 Vision Campaign Association, which has a report of the main activities in 2008 and also has plans for 2009 and beyond. We are happy to announce that it is not only in English, but also in French and Spanish. I think it is a treasure of information, where you will find a lot of inspiring examples.

I have used a lot of examples from Belgium because I take some pride in them, but there are people doing great things around the world with Mayors for Peace. You will find this information in here. Next year we will publish a new one. I hope that you will relay your information to Ypres, so that we can include it with pictures.

Chris Pilger will hand out copies of the report, and if you need more, please let us know.

Finally, I hope he is in the room because I met him last evening at the hotel where I am staying. He is from Bangladesh. I don't know if Mr. Azmat Ullah Khan is in the room. If I could invite you, I would like to give you my speaking time, because I would prefer for you to share your good news with the audience.

Mayor Dehaene

Mr. Azmat Ullah Khan is the president of the Municipal Association of Bangladesh and he has brought 13 mayors from Bangladesh to this Conference, which is wonderful because they had to travel such a long way to be with us. They are not members yet, so I've been talking with him and I would like him to share with you his plans in Bangladesh. I would like to thank you and I look forward to working with you towards 5,000 members and towards the abolition of nuclear weapons in 2020.
Thank you.

Md. Azmat Ullah Khan, Mayor of Tongi, Bangladesh President, the Municipal Association of Bangladesh

Mr. President, learned presenters, respected mayors from different cities of the world,

organizers, ladies and gentlemen. Assalam alaikum, and good afternoon to all. I am very much grateful that although I am not listed as a speaker, the honorable president has given me the floor.

I would like to say something about my country, because my country is Bangladesh. We got our independence in 1971 under the dynamic leadership of our great leader, the father of the nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Bangladesh is a small country. Its area is only 140,393 square kilometers having a population of more than 150 million. Bangladesh is a unitary state. In Bangladesh we have 309 municipalities.

The Municipal Association of Bangladesh is a leading association. I have been the president of it. We are very much grateful to the President of Mayors for Peace and the organizers of the Conference for inviting us, and grateful for the warm hospitality by the mayor and people of Nagasaki.

We, 13 members from different cities of Bangladesh, have joined in the Conference with a slogan. The slogan is, "Say 'no' to nuclear-weapon states" and "no nuclear weapons." In Bangladesh, as I said earlier, the Municipal Association of Bangladesh (MAB) is leading all 309 municipalities in Bangladesh, creating awareness of "Say 'no' to nuclear weapon states" and "no nuclear weapons" through organizing stakeholders seminars, dialogue and consultation meetings. MAB is also promoting the solidarity of all municipalities in keeping contributions to the establishment of lasting world peace, focusing on human rights, poverty reduction, and environmental protection. We strongly opposed the Cold War between nations, but strongly support the Non-Alliance Movement.

Mayor of Hiroshima and the President of Mayors for Peace hoped that membership would soon increase to 5,000-plus. Mr. President, we, the 13 members attending the Conference from Bangladesh, are sorry to say we are not members of Mayors for Peace. We intend ourselves to be members of Mayors for Peace. The Municipality Association is leading 309 municipalities. So easily, as its President of the MAB, along with my colleagues from Bangladesh, I will take the initiative to bring more members from Bangladesh. I can assure you that within four months, not less than 100 cities will be members of Mayors for Peace. (applause)

Lastly, I would like to mention that in Bangladesh, our country, its vision is “2021”. We are working for the reduction of poverty, peaceful solution of conflicts of tribal communities, and elimination of terrorism. We think this is the time to make a commitment to a nuclear-free world. This is our commitment. Thank you all.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you, thank you very much for this promise. But Aaron told us that we still have 1,900 cities to go. So, ladies and gentlemen, the microphone is now open to the audience. Are there any questions about issues that have been presented by the speakers: questions, remarks or other proposals?

Khalil bin Ibrahim Hassan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Japan

I am Khalil from Bahrain. Thank you very much for the interesting session. I would really like to thank the organizer for this excellent Conference and the efforts being put to clear the world from nuclear weapons.

Actually, what drew my attention was, on August 6, there was a poll about the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I found out that in this poll only one fifth of the people thought that hitting these cities was the wrong decision.

My question is; did you expect that sort of number? I don't want to be very straightforward, but there were opinion polls in the media, maybe in the United States and some other places, talking about whether the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by nuclear bombs were the right or wrong decision. I understand from reading these different opinion polls that not many people around the world feel...

Mayor Dehaene

Less people are aware of what happened here and the...

Ambassador Khalil

That's right. I read these polls and it was such to me that there were so many people not aware of it. My question is what is the problem? Why are people not aware of that danger? Thank you very much.

Mayor Dehaene

I think it is a rather difficult question, but you are right. And this time, due to economic and financial crisis and other lot of things around the world, the consciousness of the nuclear weapon threat is known by only a few people. That means, on the one hand, we have a lot of work to do, which Mayors for Peace and other organizations worldwide have to work on. Aaron, please.

Tovish

I am willing to let anyone else go before me, since I took more than my share of time before. But I think that one part of the problem is the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. It appears to legitimize the existence of five nuclear-weapon states, and in a sense saying it is okay to have nuclear weapons.

But, in fact the history of the treaty is quite different from the way it is often interpreted. It was explicit that this was meant only to be a temporary situation, and these five are under direct responsibility to eliminate nuclear weapons. And that part is what we think that now, finally in 2010, will become a focus of work. But, unfortunately, it has taken 40 years, and during these 40 years, people have to somehow accommodate to the fact that there are five countries in the world and perhaps several others, which seemed to be legitimately possessing these weapons. So the horror of them was glanced over by this apparent seal of approval from the Treaty. But in fact it is their obligation to eliminate them because of their deadly nature.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you for that. I see another question? Sorry, Mayor Akiba, first. Please.

Tadatoshi Akiba, Mayor of Hiroshima

President of Mayors for Peace

I don't know which poll you are talking about, but, as I mentioned yesterday, the most recent international poll taken in over 21 countries, including the nuclear-weapon states, showed that close to 80% of the people were for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

In the United States, approximately 80% of the people in the fall of 1945 supported the use of nuclear weapons. Even that opinion is changing in the United States. They are decreasing in terms of justifying the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by two atomic bombs. So I don't know which poll you are referring to that only one fifth of the people know what happened in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That is contrary to the

information I have, and also it is contrary to the trend that seems to be happening in the world. I hope you will give us the accurate quote of the poll and then, we will start from there. Anyway, that is contrary to what I know.

Mussie Hailu, Ambassador-at-Large, Republic of Burundi

Thank you. Mine is actually a compliment rather than a question, especially to Pol and his staff, and our brother from Bangladesh. I had a meeting with Mayor Akiba and also with Steven.

By the way, my name is Mussie Hailu. I work as Ambassador at Large for Burundi, and from Ethiopia. I also work with the African Union.

I just want to say that building a culture of peace and the abolition of nuclear weapons is not something we can leave only to a few cities and countries. We all need to join hands if we are to achieve the 2020 Vision. With that in mind, we had a meeting with Aaron and also with the delegates from Kenya and Ambassador of Eritrea today to bring more African voices to this movement, especially as you know one-eighth of the human family lives in Africa. Personally, along with my colleagues, we take the initiative to make sure that all cities in Africa join.

Today I was so happy to hear the Professor saying that we need to see nuclear weapons as genocides. As someone who has been working in Rwanda, I know what this means. So, we need really to join hands with all and we are with you. This is something all need to join hands together to bring true change in the world. As Mahatma Gandhi said, if we want to see change in the world, we have to change ourselves first.

Mayors and cities especially must play a bridge-building role to bring policy-makers and ordinary citizens on board to work together. The issue of peace is something we all need to be stakeholders in, not only for a few elite people.

With this in mind, I am going to bring whatever we are discussing today back to Africa. I really ask also the delegations and whoever is here to bring back home to your regions and to embrace all humanity and make sure that we can achieve this for the sake of the coming generations. If you are about to say No More Hiroshima, No More Nagasaki and No More Rwanda, it is time for us to move into actions from words. Thank you very much.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you very much, Mr. Ambassador. Someone at the back has some words. If you mention your name and city you are representing, it will be easier for the audience.

Mayra Gomez, Senior Programme Officer

Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND)

My name is Mayra Gomez. I am here representing a parliamentary organization, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. I had a sort of reaction and response to my brother from Africa, because he refers to those of us in Latin America. Although my organization is worldwide and it represents legislators from all over the world, what I can say about Latin America is that Latin America was the first region that created a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

We are going to Mexico in a couple of weeks to have a conference that is organized by the United Nations. I think Aaron referred to that. It is the DPI (the Department of Public Information) conference.

The subject of the conference precisely addresses us in the Southern hemisphere, because the subject of the Conference is disarmament for development. I think lots of us know there is a great amount of military budget spending that could go to exactly what our needs in the Southern hemisphere are, education, health, etc. That would be the subject of Mexico (Conference). Latin America is full on with the Tlatelolco Treaty, signed in Mexico originally, and we have an office of OPANAL, which is for a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Now I know in Africa, you are very close to signing the Pelindaba Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty, and I invite all the delegates here to do your utmost to make that a reality. Of course, I live in New Zealand and New Zealand is a nuclear free nation, and there is a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone as well, so in this South this is what we need to do.

We need to generate more strength from the nuclear-weapon-free zones. And why not declare space a nuclear-free zone? We should.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you. Yes, please.

Rania Alhaj Ali, Charge d’Affaires ad interim
the Syrian Arab Republic to Japan

Good afternoon. My name is Rania Alhaj Ali. I am the Charge d’Affaires of the Syrian Arab Republic.

First I want to thank the organizer of this conference. It is very enriching for us on the governmental side to hear about your efforts and campaigns, and we wish you all success.

I want to give a comment. Since I worked for five years in the UN from 2000 to 2005, I wasn’t in the First Committee, which is in charge of disarmament, but I have quite a good idea how the work is conducted there. What I want to highlight is the efforts of the Arab group in the Middle East. In 2003, my country Syria was a non-permanent member of the Security Council, and in the name of the Arab Group, we presented a draft resolution to make the Middle-East a zone free of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately, the draft was not adopted because of the refusal of certain powers for reasons everybody knows, that Israel has a nuclear arsenal. We all know that. We want our region to be really nuclear-free, which means we want the whole world to be free of nuclear weapons.

I want to tell you something. In the UN, when it comes to disarmament in the First Committee, NGOs usually are kept at a distance in a very diplomatic way. They listen, but they don’t take what you say seriously. In other committees, the presence and the role of NGOs are really strong. They usually have some of their proposals put into UN documents, which are adopted by member states later on.

I really advise you to keep the pressure on, use the media and don’t be deterred by any attempt to turn you away, because you will be shuttered away in a very nice diplomatic way. When it comes to these issues, they don’t really want the participation of civil society.

So I hope that you will not lose momentum. I hope you will keep it and wish you all the luck. Thank you.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you. And thank you for your support. Jackie?

Jacqueline Cabasso, North American Coordinator, Mayors for Peace
Executive Advisor, Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation

Thank you. My name is Jackie Cabasso. I am from the United States. I am an Executive Advisor to the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation, and I am also the North American Coordinator of Mayors for Peace.

Since I don't see our US Vice President, Mayor Donald Plusquellic of Akron Ohio, here in the room, nor do I see the representatives from the US Conference of Mayors, I would like to just give you a brief update on some of the developments in the United States.

We are slowly growing in the United States. It is not easy to get U.S. mayors to sign on. Today we have 155 members and we are continuing to grow. We have very strong support from the US Conference of Mayors, which is the association of cities with populations over 30,000. So it is about 1,200 of the biggest cities in the United States. For the last four or five years, the US Conference of Mayors has consistently adopted strong resolutions supporting Mayors for Peace at its annual conferences. This June, they unanimously adopted a resolution commending President Obama for his remarks in Prague, and also calling on him to make good on his commitments by announcing at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the initiation of multi-lateral good-faith negotiations on the treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons, by 2020. So this is the whole enchilada, a very strong resolution, and I think it is very important.

Now the challenge I have as an organizer is trying to get mayors to really take on the issue in their local communities, to raise public awareness, which is needed in order to counteract those kinds of poll numbers that the gentleman was talking about. So with some other NGO colleagues, we have been trying some experiments. Last October, we organized a conference in Des Moines, Iowa, in the middle of the country with the support of the Mayor of Des Moines, where we linked climate protection and nuclear abolition, and it was called "Nuclear Abolition, Climate Protection, and our Cities' Future." And this, I think, has some promise, because in the US Conference of Mayors, nearly a thousand of the members have signed onto a climate protection initiative.

And we are following up in Madison, Wisconsin, also in the heartland, with another conference again with the support of the Mayor there and Mayors for Peace, called “Future Cities 2009, Local Democracy in Action for a Post-Carbon, Post-Nuclear, Greener World.”

These are some of the ways in which we are trying to broaden the constituencies who are supporting the abolition of nuclear weapons, which I think we all agree we need to do with if we are to bring the campaign to fruition.

But I would like to ask you all to help me in the United States, especially those of you that have sister cities in the US. I think it will be really encouraging for you to contact them, to let them know how important Mayors for Peace and its 2020 Vision Campaign are to you in your cities, and encourage them to become even more visible in their localities in the United States, and to use their political capital to support President Obama and really push him to make good on the promises that he has made.

So that is an offer I extend to all of you and if anybody wants to talk to me separately, if you have any ideas on what we might do in the United States to encourage our mayors, I would very much welcome your input. Thank you.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you, thank you, Jackie. As far as I see, Mr. Cibot is the last one with a comment.

Cibot

I think the problem raised about opinion polls is very complicated, since we come from a country that has nuclear weapons. So we need to talk about opinion polls. In a nuclear-weapon state, we tend to believe that the direction of the poll is correct regarding our national policy on the use of nuclear weapons. But if the questions were asked in a different way, for example, as Professor Mogami said or the German philosopher Günther Anders was saying, if you ask “do you know what nuclear weapons are?” You might get different answers. Günther Anders asked the same kind of questions before and even after Hiroshima.

Since then, nuclear weapons and new technologies have really changed the human

world. I think the question should be “do you think nuclear weapons can be used for anything other than genocide?” If we ask the question in that way, that might be more useful, and public opinion would be against nuclear weapons. Normally media in countries with nuclear weapons do not raise the issue. That is why we should take action through the network of Mayors for Peace.

We have talked about various organizations in the United Nation, but also UNESCO is very important because they are involved in many educational programs and the organization exists in France. We also have a nationwide organization of Mayors for Peace in France. So in France, maybe we can work together with UNESCO to let them take on some actions. With UNESCO and other international organizations, we can probably promote education and make collaboration with them on the idea of Mayors for Peace. Maybe we can have discussions with them, and we may be able to create powerful tools out of those collaborations, which may be useful in some other countries. As somebody mentioned, the method is important. It may be good to involve UNESCO. By talking with them, we may gain new powers to get more member cities. These ideas may be useful. According to my experience, 100 new mayors can join through these ideas.

So, I would like to appreciate the activities done by Pol and also the members of the Executive Committee and those involved from the beginning. I would also thank Mayor Akiba of Hiroshima and Mayor Taue of Nagasaki for giving us a lot of potentials for Mayors for Peace. I think these are useful for other countries. That is why I really thank you.

Mayor Dehaene

Thank you, Michel.

Final conclusion: first of all, I want to thank everybody for being present here and for the people who have been with us. We heard many regional examples, which could bring us a lot of good ideas to use in our own countries and cities. I also had the overview of some national or regional protocol situations, which was also good to hear. We are reminded of the history of Mayors of Peace and the campaign. That was also good. It is hard for me to repeat the magnificent speech of Professor Mogami. I want to thank him again for that.

There are a couple of ideas I have. First of all, the power of NGOs, like the example of the power of the International Red Cross, could inspire us as Mayors for Peace to go on the same way.

The second idea is that the possession and use of nuclear weapons are formally against international law. I think this is a very important point to take further.

The last idea is that we are living in an important moment in the history. Maybe this year, we are in a financially and economically difficult situation but the difficult situations can start new opportunities and give us new hope. We also learned that this 21st Century is the era of cities and citizens and no longer of the federal states and federal governments.

Also, the momentum of the Obama speech gives us a new hope. Hopefully the Obama administration will lead and other national leaders will follow that example.

Ladies and gentlemen, this leads us to the conclusion that as Mayors of Peace, we have a huge responsibility. It is our duty to do everything in our power to reach our goal, the abolition of all nuclear weapons in 2020.

It may be a pity for Tokyo, but may I express our hope that all can be present in 2020 at the Olympic Games in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in a nuclear free world. Thank you for your support. (Applause)