

# The 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace

## **Session III**

### Regional Groups of Mayors for Peace and Facilitating Regional Activities with Citizen Involvement

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Mayor of Frogn, Norway

**Explanation of the Present Efforts:**

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**Paul Burkhard Schneider**

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Germany

**Presentation of Views:**

**Eddie Ait**

Mayor of Carrieres-sous-Poissy, France

**Waly Yatera**

Deputy Mayor of Bobigny, France

**Cecile Veyrunes-Legrain**

Deputy Mayor of Vitry-sur-Seine, France

**Josep Mayoral i Antigas**

Mayor of Granollers, Spain

**Adrian Glamorgan**

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**Osamu Takeuchi**

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**Zenya Yamazaki**

Mayor of Ayabe, Japan

**Morimasa Murakami**

Mayor of Musashino, Japan

**Juan Carlos Izagirre**

Mayor of San Sebastian, Spain

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**Osman Baydemir**

Mayor of Diyarbakir, Kurdistan, Turkey

**Serwan Abdullah Sereni**

Mayor of Rwandz, Kurdistan, Iraq

**Khder Kareem**

Mayor of Halabja Kurdistan, Iraq

**Coordinator: Mr. Thore Vestby, Mayor of Frogn, Norway**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. My name is Thore Vestby and I am mayor of Frogn in Norway. Now we will start Session III. As coordinator of this session, I would highly appreciate your cooperation to ensure this session runs smoothly. I know this is a difficult hour. Normally it is in Europe. The theme of Session III is Regional groupings of Mayors for Peace and facilitating regional activities with citizen involvement. In this session, we will listen to presentations by a lot of speakers. But first by Malakoff City in France, and mainly also prepared as we wanted from Hannover City in Germany.

These two city serve as vice presidents of Mayors for Peace. Both Malakoff and Hannover are working in unison as part of the network of member cities in France and Germany, respectively, and are playing a leading role in promoting their domestic activities of Mayors for Peace. I sincerely hope that this session will give you some concrete ideas about promoting regional grouping and encouraging regional activities, a goal agreed on in Session I held earlier today. This session will offer some hints to facilitate effective regional activities. So let us first hear from the presentation by Malakoff City of France. It will of course be presented by Mr. Cibot.

A short introduction to you about Mr. Cibot. He served as mayor in the city of Malakoff for 32 years. I don't know if that is a world record or European record or a record in France? At least it is a personal best. He retired in 2011. He has since then an honorable city manager. He is coordinating the activities in France. He has studied law and his first visit to Hiroshima was in 1975. I don't know how many times you have been here but your cooperation with Hiroshima is tremendous. Please.

**Mr. Michel Cibot, Special Advisor to Mayor of Malakoff, France**

President, ladies and gentlemen, the representative of foreign missions and the EU, and all the participants here. First of all, I would like to talk about how our association has functioned in France, how the network has functioned, and how the function developed in regions. First of all, I have to say that the French have a unique system for the local governments and I was asked to talk about what we have experienced in France in detail, specifically. French Association of Communes, Departments and Regions for Peace is the name of the organization. We still have your questions as well. Before starting my main part, I better talk about the city of Malakoff. This is an executive city of Mayors for Peace and we have a strong relationship. Our objectives are building the culture for peace and the second is the abolition of nuclear weapons. In this presentation, I am here with the full support of Malakoff City Council, and in the name of the mayor, and as the

secretary general of the Association Française des Communes, Départements et Régions pour la Paix (AFCDRP), I am here. Before talking about our organization, I think I should talk about the history and then I will talk about the function of the association and how it has been managed. First of all, I have to say that every country is unique with its own distinctive features. Therefore, cultural diversity is a reality. What happened in a country may not be applied automatically to other countries. However, it is really right that all humankind desire for peace and that means we can learn lessons from other countries first about the history.

I would like to share with you the local story. The fight for peace in my town goes back a long way. I want to talk about the details. In 1914, before the start of WWI, many citizens of the town wanted to listen to the voice of Jean Jaures who was adamantly against war but he was assassinated on July 31, 1914, and the war started on August 4. After that, Malakoff staged a resistance against Nazism or the antiwar campaign in China and Algeria. Malakoff was not the only city who made contributions for peace activity, but with a long history of peace, Malakoff could make a contribution in the creation of the association. Now let us talk about the strategy of France.

France is one of the nuclear weapon states. This military strategy has many active advocates in nearly every political group represented by local officials because they view this as a way to preserve national independence. However, this analysis is debatable. The green movement which has very few local officials and the Communist party, which has a greater numbers, many in the local councils, they are largely in favor of nuclear disarmament. A few socialists and a few representatives of the center and liberal rights criticize or question this obsolete strategy. I want to name here the former Socialist Defense Minister Paul Quilès. It is quite uncommon for a former minister, especially a minister of defense to suggest abolishing nuclear missiles. He published a book titled *Abolish Nuclear Weapons*. This suggests that what we are trying to do is not done in vain and we are actually changing the international voices.

The far right totally depends on nuclear weapons. It is a concern that there is a relative electoral success in France and the rest of Europe. Only in 1992, the French signed the NPT treaty aimed at abolishing nuclear weapons. Yet France signed it through the actions for nuclear disarmament with the AFCDRP and Mayors for Peace France. We are showing that France is moving in the right direction. And the local authorities are responsible for public health and safety of the population. Consequently, towns and local authorities are perfectly capable of taking actions in defense of peace and nuclear

disarmament. French territory is organized into regions and departments and communes. There are 36,700 communes. The French are very attached to these communes. Elected officials are mainly focused on peace. 31,500 out of 36,700 have fewer than 2,000 inhabitants. Communes and the three departments are a part of AFCDPR. The context is complex because of the context around us is in favor of nuclear weapons. AFCDPR members pursuing peace and we are not alone in trying to establish our own local association. Malakoff eventually had to take up the sole role to start up this organization. An AFCDPR representative visited Hiroshima and this was my first visit to Hiroshima. I was able to meet *hibakusha* directly and I visited the Peace Memorial Museum.

Since my first visit to Hiroshima, we established a Hiroshima-Nagasaki institute with Miho Cibot-Shimma being the president of the institute. Those were the days when Europeans were demonstrating against the missiles that the US had installed in Europe. In 1984, I came back to Hiroshima again and I met Mr. Araki, mayor of Hiroshima. We were then invited to Hiroshima in 1985 to the first general conference. I was here on behalf of Malakoff and Cibot was representing Hiroshima-Nagasaki Institute. And Aubagne was also invited. And with several other cities Carrieres-sous-Poissy and Saint-Denis, every four years we decided we should visit Hiroshima or Nagasaki. Many of the cities who were directly invited by Hiroshima are not so interested in this issue. This is a picture in 1990. I was the managing director of Malakoff and I suggested that we should invite Mr. Araki to our city. This is the suggestion I made to our mayor and Mr. Araki was granted honorary citizenship.

In 1993 we welcomed the general conference. In 1995, the new mayor of Hiroshima, Mr. Hiraoka, was welcomed to France. With the name of Malakoff, we invited those people and we decided to form a network, a new organization. Communes, departments, and regions are all welcome to participate. With a dozen towns, we created the AFCDPR in 1997. All local governments can participate in the French Association of Communes, Departments and Regions for Peace.

Now I would like to talk about the role. The first president was a woman, Marie Claire Petit, town councilor of Malakoff. We started with 10 members. This representing 7,000 people. This is Daniel Fontaine, the mayor of Aubagne, the president in 2001 Arradon, Chalette-sur-Loing, and Vitry-sur-Seine, who are represented here, and Saint-Denis. We had four vice presidents. According to the French law, we had a secretary general and a treasurer to complete this organization. We have the general assembly meeting at least once a year and the location changes annually. The AFCDPR's first task was to translate

documents into French, many done by the president of Hiroshima-Nagasaki Institute on a voluntary basis. Because most local elected officials and their staff are only familiar with their own language, the access to the documents was quite important and it was done through translation. Documents had to be translated into the local official matter's language. But the amount of documents to be translated was becoming overwhelming. A minimum of funding was needed. We asked for help from the network members and we set up a modest membership fee system. Little by little over the course of a few years, this enabled us to create a common fund sufficient to employ first or second persons in charge of translation and other management issues. We have our office inside the premises of Malakoff City. This is authorized by the unanimous decision from the town council. We offer training to elected officials at town offices of Malakoff for peace culture. After the translation being the first step, we moved to the second stage. Various initiatives from member authorities started. Peace culture education is what we are promoting. We prepared a panel or Mayors for Peace logo on road signs, we encouraged member cities to place them. We also circulate exhibits and films in French, especially on the theme of A-bombing to bring home the reality of A-bombing and to stimulate reflection. It is important the members of the network have access to these information tools since we strongly encourage them to increase initiatives with their local population and associations. We must give them the means to do so by constantly providing new tools. In 2005, we were able to organize the important exhibition on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at Paris City Hall in accordance with the collaboration protocol signed between Paris and Malakoff. This was the first time that our capital city had agreed to host the Hiroshima 60-years later exhibition and the mayor of Paris and the mayor of Hiroshima met with each other on the location. The exhibition was very successful and Paris City Hall decided to prolong it. Through various AFCDRP network, we organized testimonies from A-bomb survivors across the whole of France. For instance, during the exhibition held in Nanto, the city got involved with the local services of the Ministry of Education and many young people listened to the testimony by Ms. Matsumoto's testimony. The town of Bobigny and Saint Denis invited the children and teenagers to listen to the testimonies of *hibakusha* and Auschwitz survivors. The town of Carrieres-sous-Poissy and young people from the town of Vron welcomed Ms. Hama who came to give a testimony about experience in Hiroshima. In 2003 and 2011, we also organized in France two tours of young musicians from Hiroshima Junior Marimba Ensemble who made a very beautiful performance yesterday. They were extremely successful through music. They helped educate the French citizens by a simple reference to their hometown. After the concert, the young Japanese musicians were able to meet French young people. In 2011, the year when Japan suffered the enormous

earthquake, the Hiroshima Junior Marimba Ensemble tour helped strengthen solidarity project in support of the disaster victims in Japan. As you can see on this picture, those are high school students from Hiroshima. They went to the town Oradour-sur-Glane, which was devastated in war and also in La Rochelle they were able to visit. About 25 high school students among them are actually here helping this conference behind the scenes as volunteer workers. The city of Hiroshima is very important. We need to try to convey what they experienced and reorganize the exhibition for children to learn. AFCDRP members make use of such exhibitions – for instance, a little girl, Sadako, who was A-bombed at the age of 2 and they died 10 years later. Japanese relations says that holding a thousand paper cranes can cure a disease and recover health.

Many people were able to see the exhibition and also watched Sadako's film on paper cranes. After watching the film, the children folded paper cranes and showed the paper cranes they made to their parents and grandparents at home to spread the message of peace. In 2000, the Malakoff City Council adopted the Peace Culture Manifesto proposed by UNESCO. This cooperation with an international organization has strengthened the local perception already very positive over actions from 2005-2012. We are part of the French International Commission for UNESCO so collaboration with the organization like UNESCO is extremely crucial. The UN declared September 21<sup>st</sup> International Peace Day. Each year, AFCDRP members commemorate this day by taking actions to promote peace in the peace culture spirit as advocated by UNESCO. And also AFCDRP coordinates delegations, bringing together Mayors for Peace French members during the UN meetings on the NPT treaty and also bring delegations to Geneva and New York. This is a photo of members in New York on the occasion of one of such meetings.

I feel dozens of authorities have been associated with our network activities. The aim remains to involving the population and their elected representatives in those fundamental causes from the local to global level. As the director general of Malakoff service, I have spent time and many holidays doing research so that the principles and values of peace culture may become tools for local management. Also I have represented Malakoff at the Mayors for Peace Executive Conference and also Vision 2020 Campaign until 2003. And in 2003 in Manchester, the financial contribution to the Vision 2020 Campaign from all members of Mayors for Peace was raised and we supported this proposal and suggested adopting our French type of organizational structure. At first we were not able to gather enough support from the fellow members. It is important to take into consideration each locality's conditions. Each town and

authority has its own work programs and its own rhythms and programs, there it needs to be tailored to each condition. In concrete terms, for three years now, AFCDRP gives 10,000 euros each year to the global network for the 2020 Vision Campaign. This result shows how AFCDRP preserves in its involvement. Moreover, we contribute to the global network of Mayors for Peace in particular provision of lots of information.

Especially, we encourage authorities to set up a local action program for peace culture and there are a lot of town projects bringing together all local initiatives from public service initiatives to NGOs. For instance, training or human resource development, we provide specific suggestions and services. And we also provide services which would help the operations of local authorities and it is important we continue to upgrade information and tools we provide to our fellow member cities. The next key step in our action as an organization is the Mediterranean Cities for Peace Conference, which is going to be co-organized in Aubagne, near Marseille, by the towns of Granollers in Spain and Biograd na Moru of Croatia. Granollers and Biograd na Moru are the executive member cities of the Mayors for Peace. And Aubagne is currently the president presiding over AFCDRP. And the Mediterranean is certainly an area which is still filled with many problems. Nuclear disarmament is one of the most important programs we cover and it relates to various aspects of local and regional authorities, administration, associates, environment, sustainable development, and human resources. Listening to the public in the community and also conflict prevention and management. In all of those areas, we believe that the eight principles of the Culture of Peace proposed by UNESCO are extremely relevant. Action for peace must not be reduced to a cultural declaration for the cities' PR or communication. It is a true critical commitment determining individual and collective behavior for consciousness and generous management of our towns and territories. The support we received from the ICRC and Oslo conference is a very precious support we got for development. AFCDRP is not a cumbersome system acting as a substitute for authorities delegating their work for peace. It is a tool for cooperation, sharing, pooling, and ongoing training for all of us. We invite the members of our organization to officially appoint elected officials in charge of peace culture and to spread it among each area and population.

This has been a rather brief presentation but I hope that this has given you an idea of how we operate in a country which is challenging because of its position of nuclear weapons. Countries which are fortunate enough not to have such terrible weapons might have less difficulty in organizing themselves better and share awareness of the danger and make us want to see a way out of this through sharing human will. Action for peace

starts with a clearly voiced intention in the direction to aspire for peace and say that we want it is the first necessary step towards peace. Thank you very much. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mr. Michel Cibot for this brilliant presentation and all the activities please. I would like to ask the audience if there are any questions to Mr. Cibot or if there are any comments on his activities or other things? You have the opportunity right now. Or that could be used afterwards of course. Mr. Michel Cibot is with us always. There is one question over there so if you could please stand up, you will get a microphone.

**Professor Eugen Eichhorn, Technische Fachhochschule Berlin, University of Applied Science**

Thank you very much for your speech. As you know, I am coming from Germany, from Berlin. We are very interested to go in more deep contact with you because we are neighbors and a lot of common problems to solve in the next future. I would like to take the opportunity to talk to you later for some future projects.

**Mr. Cibot**

Friends from Germany, especially those from Hannover, on many occasions for projects we have worked with them together and we certainly hope to develop such a collaborative relationship expanded on the European scale. I fully support such an initiative. We are here to cooperate with you at any time.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mr. Cibot. This session has the participation of representatives of other friends and municipalities that are working very closely together with Malakoff. Among them are Carrieres-sous-Poissy, Bobigny, and Vitry-sur-Seine and they have asked for the opportunity to speak in this session. And of course they will have the chance to do that. Now I first call upon representative for Carrières-sous-Poissy to speak. Can you please come to the podium? Next is from the municipality of Bobigny.

**Mr. Eddie Ait, Mayor of Carrieres-sous-Poissy, France**

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and a sense of honor that I am given this opportunity to speak at the 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace. Since six years ago, I have been serving as the mayor of our city

Carrières-sous-Poissy about which I would like to talk a little about. We are a member of AFCD RP. Nuclear weapons are totally against the culture of peace. That is the basic reason why we joined this cause and activity. We decided to take part in AFCD RP because it is so well-known. There were three important activities of AFCD RP. One is to provide information concerning the culture of peace, the second is education about peace and communication or public relations activities. This is the third pillar of AFCD RP's activity. First about education, our sense of values need to be communicated very well through the method of training and education. AFCD RP also organizes various exhibitions. For instance, clothes from Hiroshima exhibition and also an exhibition called Sadako and the paper cranes. Various theatrical plays have also been organized. Furthermore, thanks to the efforts by AFCD RP, our city was able to welcome Ms. Hama, one of the Hiroshima *hibakusha*. In September last year, she gave us her testimony about the experience. Human resources development and awareness raising for citizens and city government employees and officials. The sense of values about peace need to be fully internalized by themselves and, more broadly, human rights need to be very deeply understood through such education and training.

Peace research needs to also be promoted hand-in-hand with education and training. Peace activities in a sense have certain political dimensions. Through public relations and also through municipal activities and measures, we would like to certainly promote a culture of peace and we do mass-media campaigns on various occasions. On various themes, we take up issues for awareness raising. To achieve all of those objectives, we really count upon the cooperation with AFCD RP, but of course we carry out our local activities and also encourage citizens' involvement in our peace activities.

The formation of AFCD RP itself was a very significant milestone in our peace activities. AFCD RP certainly has the largest and strongest presence in France, and regional group activities led by AFCD RP are certainly quite useful. Through such local oriented activities and also in consult with the representatives from abroad, we have decided to take part in this Mayors for Peace conference. September 21, the international day of peace, is one of the occasions we celebrate peace. For instance, the release of helium balloons for peace promotion and also planting of trees of peace.

In 2012 and also in collaboration with UNICEF, we have done various activities because Carrieres is one of the friendly to children cities network. As part of such activities, we focus upon nurturing citizenship and the sense of peace. Peace culture has to be taken by each individual on a daily basis. Each person has a responsibility for

building and keeping peace. Of course that is relevant for the city government as well. Without the assistance of the AFCDRP, it is difficult for each local government to carry out such local activities, as was discussed by Mr. Michel Cibot. Local regional grouping of cities concerned and likeminded, we believe, is an extremely relevant for solidifying our foundation of future activities. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mayor Eddie Ait. Now I will have the floor over to Bobigny.

**Mr. Waly Yatera, Deputy Mayor of Bobigny, France**

Nice to meet you ladies and gentlemen and I would like to express my gratitude for your kind hospitality. I come here with the honor of conveying my madam mayor's message. Our city, Bobigny, is the capital city of the prefecture. It is a peaceful city and we are making efforts towards nurturing cultural peace, which is a condition for achieving peace.

But a century ago, 4% of the world population resided in urban areas. Currently, more than half the population resides in urban areas. Talking about our city of Bobigny, our population is 48,000 and within the center Seine-Saint-Denis prefecture, which is a prefecture located in the northeast from Paris. We have many struggles for peace and antiwar, for example Kosovo, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine. We were always against wars. This is because we have many migrants from various parts of the world. Bobigny is a melting pot, if you like. As such, we have many elements for peace and we respect various elements that are necessary for peace.

The role of our city is to ensure and guarantee peace and then guarantee dialogue on a day-to-day basis, to make sure that each citizen and individual can participate in building a better peaceful society and have them participate in building a peaceful society. Since 1998 we have been implementing various citizen participation activities. Based on these, we build the future. The citizens build their future on their own and we have them participate in creating their own future. There is international peace day, we take this opportunity to start various new initiatives.

In terms of what the city of Bobigny has conducted, I am not going to talk about the details but I would like to introduce to you some of the things we focus on. The first is the right and the duty of the memory and passing down the experience. In the two world wars, we had a terrible experience. So one-third of our French living Jews were sent

from Bobigny to Nazi detention centers. That is what our city's history was. Talking about culture of history, we have to stand on various assumptions and foundations. For this, firstly we must be able to have our citizens control the advancement of technological advancement and we have to start from our youth.

In our city, from 3 to 12 year old children, we give them voting rights to elect their members of child's committee parliament and we form a committee of children ages ranging from 9-12. We let them learn how to run the city government so that they can experience the running and exercising of democracy. That is what we focus on. Also to give you some more details, we have many projects for children and we have children themselves be involved in decision making and building the projects; school, preventing violence, respecting others, peace, and sports in various areas. By giving them various opportunities to have dialogue with adults as representatives of their fellow children, they have an opportunity to express their opinions to the adult committee members and also the city council.

It is important that all nations' citizens rise and act locally in order to build a culture of peace. First we have to stop the arms race and also stop the acts to deprive human rights. They are still developing M-51 missiles which costs billions of euros. At the same time, many people are living in poverty. Bobigny has the trace and scar of persecuting Jewish people and citizens of our city rise from this challenge and try to grow into better citizens. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Mr. Vestby**

And now the third speaker from France. It is the deputy mayor of Vitry-sur-Seine. Ms. Cecile Veyrunes-Legrain. That was good. Maybe.

**Ms. Cecile Veyrunes-Legrain, Deputy Mayor of Vitry-sur-Seine, France**

Ladies and gentlemen in the audience, the delegations of Vitry-sur-Seine are participating in this session, again in Hiroshima, and we feel very honored to be able to be here. Our city is located slightly less than 10 km to the north of Paris and we promote solidarity with people and with a tradition of cooperation with the rest of the world we have been working towards peace building. In the same way that the cities here in Hiroshima, Vitry is involved in many projects for the benefit of others and a project's awareness of cultural peace and projects of friendship and collaborative projects to meet the expectations of everyone involved. Peace is not the opposite notion of war. Peace

should be regarded separately from wars. Otherwise we will not be able to understand any elements of peace.

In 2005, we received a visit from former Mayor of Hiroshima Akiba and there was demonstration for the breach of three non-nuclear principles. In 2010 we had a dialogue with the citizens about the nuclear policy of our government. We accused the French's use of money on nuclear programs and we are members of Mayors for Peace, but also we are more proactive in participating in other meetings held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Peace is the most important notion and it should be considered totally separate from warfare. In 2011, on the international peace day, that is the meaning we want to assign to this day. I think it is extremely valuable if we have children participate in this event. We want our children to nurture peace. Drawing and discussion, and there are many creative activities. Several organizations exercise their creativity to make these initiatives a success. Paper cranes are displayed in Hiroshima Memorial Park, and the flags of various countries are displayed in the park; Senegal, Vietnam, Cuba, and other nations' youth joined their hands together. Their project is humanitarian language and culture and other areas.

We are trying to plant ginkgo trees and one of them is planted in the city council's garden. Also as the symbol of friendship with Palestine, we also planted an olive tree. Our city, every year, receives children from West Sahara, and also from Czech. Since three years ago, we started receiving children from the city of Jericho; solidarity, freedom education, but also friendship building for peace are extremely important to achieve peace education. During summer vacation camp, West Sahara children will stay at the families in our city Vitry. They do homestay. So in a family environment, children from refugee camps and French children can nurture their friendship with each other. In this space of freedom, then they can build their friendship with each other. This kind of friendship between different ethnic groups should be nurtured and we hope the friendship will grow.

Other Vitry delegations here with me today have many anecdotes like this and we believe the power of these anecdotes because they will give us new direction, the direction in which the people of the two citizens with no obstacles form friendship and then remove all political barriers to move in the same direction. Vitry-sur-Seine City is trying to become a city that is friendly to children, which started as an initiative of UNICEF. Now 234 cities participate in this children-friendly city network and by participating in this network, we make sure that we listen to children's needs and

support children, growing their sense of friendship and solidarity with other people of other countries.

Rather than confrontation and competition, we want our children to grow with a sense of friendship. Education, art, technology, and music, exchanging these areas will promote peace. Our mayor promotes intelligence and knowledge and respect for others as the foundation. When children grow up into an adult, we want to make sure that they grow into citizens who know the importance of peace. Peace is above any confrontation. In order to protect peace, we have to make efforts continuously to listen to the others. That is what is required of us now. We always participate in the activities of Mayors for Peace and we will continue to do so. Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Mr. Vestby**

Then we are moving to the neighboring country, Spain. A well-known mayor of Granollers; Josep Mayoral, the floor is yours.

**Mr. Josep Mayoral i Antigas, Mayor of Granollers, Spain**

Good afternoon. I think it is my turn to make the presentation. First of all, the cities are the children of the history. Some tragic daughters of the parents, in that sense, Hiroshima in August 6, 1945, it was hit by the tragedy on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August in the same year. Nagasaki was also attacked by the tragedy. I am from Granollers. We have also the daughter of the tragedy in the history. In 1938, May 31, there was the civil war in Spain and we still mean to stop that.

Up until that time, we were a very peaceful city. But five aircrafts from Italy attacked us. 14,000 people were attacked by a 1 minute air raid, totaling the death of 240 people, casualties of more than 500, and the city was totally destroyed with blood. Mussolini created such an initiative of attacks. That was one of the first attacks over the civilians. They have done that for the training of their soldiers. Of course there are some other cities which were targeted by the air raid. In that sense, we are the sister and brother cities which were attacked by the agony and tragedy and bloodshed. There has to be accountability on behalf of the cities. We cannot be silent. It is our mission. We have to voice out our opinions and will. Our city was completely bloodshed. We cannot remain silent for this.

For example, in Spain there was the Franco dictatorship. But the Franco administration has given a lot of suppression and repression over the citizens. We had to fight against

them. There was the oppressed peace inside of the silence. We cannot just receive this silently. We cannot repeat the destruction and the wars to be repeated. No more wars. No more air raids and bombing. What is the agony, what is the tragedy? We had experienced. We know that. We have learned that as the citizens. We were in the camps at one time and our dialogue was disconnected. Violence has repressed the rationality of the people. But we learned it.

Peace has the existence going beyond the existence of the violence. And peace is the basis of the freedom and liberty and also equality. We are seeking peace. We are making our best efforts to do that and we will continue to make such efforts to create our future. Therefore, to all of you and to all the other people who are not here, and as you have heard about the strategy by the French cities as to how and what kind of efforts we continue to exert for the search of peace, this is going to be the continuous commitment. We are now shifting our movement from the local to the global peace movement. This is the movement for peace.

Allow me to talk about five strategies we have set in our city. First, we have to identify what had happened in the past. Why it happened, that has to be fully analyzed. That would enhance the level of consciousness and awareness and try to renew our memories. We should never forget about the past. Unless we know what had happened in the past, we are not able to build up the future.

Secondly, policy for peace, that cannot be realized. Not by the hands of the mayor but also the assembly of the city, but the citizens' participation is the critical participation. Building up the dialogue amongst them is very important. In our city, we have the gathering of the citizens. We have to seek for the world without war, only based on peace. I sincerely hope that we will dedicate ourselves in order to heighten the awareness level of the citizens. In order to do that, mayors and the city have to go hand-in-hand with the citizens.

Thirdly, as was just presented by the other participant, the key for the future is in education. The city is responsible for the education of the young people. Through education, we are able to enhance the human resources and people development. Peace education at school is in that sense very important but what is more important here is the continuous lifelong education in peace, not only at school but also in the informal set up in various sectors in all the cities of the globe, peace education has to be continued. The city and the town have to make the commitment to educate their people.

Of course there are some other things you can learn at school, but the schools are the center for education. I think we will be able to make the best use of these schools. And we can also do the same in the other organizations such as in community education.

It will be different depending on the generation you are talking about. Our parents were attacked by the air raid. I was not born at that time. But I know what they had communicated to me and we had this conversation all the time with our parents. Parents and grandparents continued to communicate with us, children, as well as the grandchildren. Intergenerational conversation and dialogue is very important. I believe this can also become the basis of education. At the risk of repeating myself, the key point is education.

Number four, the cities are one important you need to worry about international education can be carried out. The cities are able to implement the international policies. Why did I say this? Because for us, when you talk, you try to look at the eyes of the counterparts between the mayors and the cities. We are able to create our public policy. Because we do not have the weapons, the only weapon is the language and dialogue. By using this as a tool we will be able to deepen the ties and connection in creating the bridge with a counterpart. We are the activists for peace. We are the bearer of the peacemaking. With the organizations of the citizens, we are able to appeal to the importance of peace.

Number five, citizens can make the best use of the network. In 1982, Mayors for Peace was created and mayors and cities and local authorities got together and learned so many things. Each individual is small and vulnerable but by making a network, we would be able to increase our capacity and power. Maybe we can become invincible partners. Through the networking we are able to accomplish our goals. We are capable of that. In each country in each state in each city and town, we hope to expand the networking. As Monsieur Cibot said, "For us, between the cities, between the territories, it is necessary to build up a network that is more effective and more vitally we are able to accomplish our goals."

In September in France, a representative of France and Croatia are going to get together in AFCDRP. And also with the mayors of the Mediterranean, Mayors for Peace is going to be created. On the Mediterranean Sea, it used to be the sea of culture as well as the sea of conflicts; from north to south, from west to east, along the coastal lines. There were a lot of conflicts in the past. But the governments did not do much of that. For

example, Syria was such an example. With our strong determination, if the central governments continued to be silent, we have to voice out our feelings and we have to establish and implement the common solutions to the problems. We the neighboring nations, we have to start our dialogue. There are a lot of peace issues. Everybody was so concerned about the peace. We have to get rid of the weapons. We have to abolish the nuclear weapons. Let us now create the network. By still doing, we hope we will be able to increase and double our power. With our strong voices, we hope that we will be able to appeal to the central government to put the hands together.

**Mr. Vestby**

We moved from France to Spain and we are moving back through France to Germany. May I ask Mr. Paul Schneider to take place on the podium? Paul is one of the invited speakers so I will tell you that he is also a lawyer, started working as an attorney, but he turned into politics and was the CEO of the Free Democratic Party Council in Hannover for several years. He is now head of the International Unit of the Lord Mayor's Office, dealing with strategy and politics of course. He has a lot of professional memberships, also non-professional memberships. That means he is a very active man and I can tell you that he also has been a volunteer firefighter. Now he is fighting much higher temperatures so let us hear how they do it in Hannover. Please.

**Mr. Paul Burkhard Schneider, Head of the International Unit of the Lord Mayor's Office, Hannover, Germany**

Thank you very much Thore for the introduction. Good afternoon everyone. Happy being here and able to share a bit about Mayors for Peace in Germany. I am not going to talk about my home city, I am not going to talk about all these kinds of events. You can do in your own city halls. I can promise you and make sure that everything of that has been mentioned has been done in Hannover, not at least by the long lasting relations with Hiroshima and the long lasting history with regard to the peace movement in our city as there is a tradition to that as well. However, I did bring you a map of Europe and that place in the first place. Some were in the middle, north, you will find Germany. The red dots here on that map should remind you on the five lasting points in Europe where the US still has nuclear weapons and that is as well in Germany, as it is to Turkey, as it is to Italy, as it is to Belgium, and the Netherlands. That is a very particular situation, at least in some countries in Europe.

The German section of Mayors for Peace has about 409 members. You are seeing the red spots here and some of the accumulation of these spots are attached around former

US airbases where nuclear weapons or intercontinental weapons were based. And there were a lot of movements of the cities and the citizens in that area. However, what are we doing with these 409 members?

Since 1987, we are inviting our members for an annual meeting to Hannover or to another place within Germany. 1987, that is quite a long time ago. Mayors for Peace has had about a hundred members at that time. 40-50 were from Germany at that period and we are holding the executive conference in 1987 so it was quite a good thing to combine it with at the first annual conference. And to say at least one sentence about that first conference, this first conference was not so much about nuclear disarmament. All of these cities did want to abolish nuclear weapons; that was for sure. But they had deep trouble with the ministries of interior. They did tell the cities that they are not allowed to take part. So the first meeting was more about how are we able to make German cities able to take part in Mayors for Peace and to spend money on that or to make action with that?

However, there is a distinct way of doing these conferences. We are of course having a keynote speech from several people. We have had the mayors for Hiroshima, we have had the ambassadors from Japan, we had the Minister for Foreign Affairs, we had people that were holding the Right Livelihood Award, and we had leading scientists. But that was more or less and is still to attract the people to go there. Mayors and you know better than I, need some attraction to go somewhere and to leave their officers and their cities. Taking up on that and talking about what we can do on a local and regional level and we are getting an update what is going on an international level, of course, too. I thought about giving you a more vivid expression of that. I hope that you will be understanding. That is a movie of our last annual conference in Bonn that time.

#### *Movie*

“First of all, a very warm welcome for the Mayors for Peace here in Bonn. You know Bonn is Germany’s United Nations city and it’s hard to discuss questions like questions like climate change and sustainability. But that is all nothing without peace and so we are very engaged to help that we can have peace in the future.”

“We have a number of leadership initiatives that have called for a nuclear weapons free world but haven’t yet put forward a plan to do that, such as President Obama’s call for a vision for a nuclear weapons free world that he spoke about in Prague a few years ago. But more importantly, Ban Ki-moon, the UN Secretary General, has put forward an

actual plan on how we could actually achieve a nuclear weapons free world. So here today we will see what role mayors and parliamentarians working together can play to support this.”

**Mr. Schneider**

We can leave it at that. That is to give you an impression about in which kind of way we are going to have this kind of annual conference. It is improving from year to year and is amazing to see the commitment of our cities towards that. When I took over, more or less, the task to coordinate the German Mayors for Peace two years ago, I did find 400 members approximately that were like a sleeping elephant to me. Everyone was dedicated to the task but no one really did anything; well, except coming to the annual conference.

It was really a question of how to get them moving again and if I would say today that we reached that goal, I would be lying to you. But I think we made a major step in that perspective. We introduced last year something that we call the “Flag Day.” Here you see it as flying the flag. It is quite an easy thing to do actually and we used to do it in our cities. We are flying flags of our cities, of our national state, on more or less a daily level. And we thought about why should we not do it once at least a year for Mayors for Peace?

So we decided to launch that day and I am happy to say that this year 110 members of our 400 did take part in that. They did take part in that one day all over Germany and we provided them some information to that to inform the press. We had finalized press releases for that and we got press coverage all over Germany on that day; and the following days in local, regional, and national newspapers. We got into TV and radio in the same day. What is really impressive is to look at the press coverage afterwards. It is one of the seldom occasions, at least I would say, that we had and Germany had press coverage at all, to that topic and that engagement of cities. This year we were very lucky in another point of view too. If you get something moving, you are looking as well as some people partnering you. We are partnering with, of course, civil society organizations. I am coming to that in a moment later, and they helped us to move the international campaign ICAN to move their nuclear abolition week to the week that we wanted to have the flag day. So the start of the nuclear abolition week in Germany was the 8th of July with the flag day of Mayors for Peace. And probably you are asking why the 8th of May? It was mentioned already in Session II today. In 1996, the International

Court of Justice did write an advisory opinion which was asked by the General Assembly of the United Nations about the use and threat of nuclear weapons.

It was said there that the use and the threat is against international law, at least in principle. We thought that is a very good day, except of course 6 of August or 9 of August which are addressed in Germany from quite a lot of cities, but we thought about that as a good day for cities to refer to, to have more or less an objective source to tell the people outside why we are going to go outside that day. The second thing is we don't have any particular concurrence of that day. If you are thinking about International Peace Day and other things, there is lots of movement outside; lots of organizations that want to make their point. We thought about the 8th of July, we can make our point there by ourselves and it is working. It is working in a double way.

We were talking about this today, about fundraising. We were talking about the 2020 Vision Campaign. And everyone knows how difficult it is to get money from mayors and cities. The flag was produced by the city of Hannover. We did give them as a present to the 2020 Vision Campaign and we asked our mayors to give 100 euros each for one flag to the 2020 Vision Campaign, and that is working out. They are paying for it. And in case they do not pay for it, civil society organizations in their cities do pay for it and hand it over as a gift to their cities. That is quite an interesting thing for me to discover how engaged civil society organizations can be in a very positive way. And I will conclude later on that we would be nothing, at least in Germany, without our colleagues at civil society organizations.

To give you a couple of pictures as well about it, several cities just go through it to get an idea and if you can get one back – and it is a very easy thing to do. Every one of you knows how easy it is. The point is we did agree beforehand with our partners in civil society organizations that they would partner us on that day and we offered each and every mayor who wanted to participate that we make the linkage between them and the organizations. We had some quite interesting points there. A city like Dortmund, that is a bigger one, it was about 400,000-450,000 habitants in Germany. They remember. The new mayor didn't really know about Mayors for Peace at that moment. They were reminded by us and they were approached by the civil society organizations so they fly the flag on July 8 and they made a small reception that day in the town hall. So the two of them did agree upon “Let us do it on the 6th of August, a poster exhibition together. Ad let us have speeches over the year.” And so a dormant member became an active one once more. And they got engaged with civil society. That was really impressive and that

not only taking place in Dortmund, that was taking place in quite a lot of spots in Germany and it is increasing.

Now as it is 110, we as well are recognizing that people are citizens of Mayors for Peace cities which did not fly the flag our approach by the citizens. And I asked why did you not join the other Mayors for Peace cities? That might be a chance as well as for others and I really would love to engage my colleagues at least in Europe to go on such a particular day where we could fly a flag together. I was as well asked to talk a bit about the collaboration with NGOs. We have seen it on the picture before perhaps. There was the sign when it says here in German,. That is more, "Get rid of nukes now."

This is a collaboration and the first place of NGOs in Germany. 50 NGOs, smaller ones to bigger ones, and once you know, like IPPNW, having joined that collaboration, and they invited Mayors for Peace to be a part of that collaboration. We said, "Yes, we will go with you. But of course, you are NGOs and we are somehow a part of executive part of a state. We can do quite a lot of things together but there are limits to our cooperation." Of course in cases if you do some events, which in the way that they do it, are probably difficult from a point of view of law or from a point of view of an executive body as the governments are. To make an example, in the upcoming weekend we will have protests in Germany around the air force base where nuclear weapons are placed. It would not be appropriate for us to invite as well as Mayors for Peace in Germany to having a concert there. It would not be appropriate to invite to discussions there. But at the moment, as the civil society organizations do want to block the gates towards and from the air force base, then we are getting into problems with law.

You can think about it in different ways. You can say, "Well, it is in the boundary of the laws." But still our mayors do not want to give an example in that way. So therefore, we are collaborating in a way of cooperation and we are not allowing to use our name and our code of arms of Mayors for Peace. However, nowadays we know the rules. We know where the problems are on the other side. And we were able to create a campaign together, which taking into account of course the roles of each other. Interesting probably is that we were invited to launch that campaign of a subcommittee of the German Parliament. So hand in hand with parliamentarians, we introduced our campaign for the year 2015 and this was last year in 2012. We have had in the first place, the first phase was towards the NATO summit in Chicago. Now we are having elections in autumn in Germany and we have to convince all the candidates that they are along

our ideas as well. And finally, the last step in that is of course, and that doesn't come in with all what we do, the NPT in 2015 in New York.

We are doing quite a lot of things together. That is a picture of the homepage of that collaboration and you see the sign of Mayors for Peace down there. Additionally, we get a lot of help by these organizations to host our own homepage. The website of Mayors for Peace is translated into German and updated of course with German use as well. And we would not be capable to do so. We have a big help of NGOs at that time and of course as well of 2020 Vision Campaigners which are part of the civil society organization too. We are using together and Mayors for Peace in Germany as well by itself. We are using blog, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Flickr. That was helpful with the flag day as well, once more to motivate the people and beforehand and afterwards. And it was interesting, when I was talking about the annual conference, when you saw a bit of that video, but we as well did record all the speeches. And they are out on the market, it is called SoundCloud.

So we presented the speeches of all speakers to the mayors which were not able to participate at that particular day. And of course others were able to listen to it as well. As we join forces, civil society and ourselves, we are having an organizing breakfast with parliamentarians as an example. The next, we have press conferences with experts, parliamentarians once more, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For the NGOs, Mayors for Peace is really important as we are able to open up doors to the government and to parliamentarians in a different way as they are able to do it, therefore we do it together. On the other hand, it is really difficult to get the mayors moving to other places. We are joining forces to not take too much time from our leading members. And the collaboration as well, it goes in other directions. Who has been to the NPT in Vienna last year?

It was asked of a good friend of mine and a 2020 Vision Campaigner, Wolfgang Schlupp-Hauck, to sign a letter to the general secretary of NATO. Most if not all of the Mayors for Peace representatives did sign that letter. And he with some other friends, he went on a cycle tour from the south in Germany, crossing all the places where nuclear weapons still are based, and they went to the NATO headquarters next to Brussels. On the way they visited all Mayors for Peace cities. They got and we assisted with that. They got appointments with all the mayors along that way. All the mayors invited them. All the mayors asked for the press to be there. All the mayors signed that letter additionally. We had press coverage once more in the newspapers in several cities along

that way. And Wolfgang Schlupp-Hauck was able to present that letter in the office of the general secretary there. Then it was not finished at that moment and I am very happy to say that NATO really was able to send an answer letter to every one of our members that signed on that way, at least to the German ones.

Yesterday in two leading newspapers in Germany, we had advertisements the days before August 6 and August 9, and we are asking the candidates for parliament, the future members of the government, to stay with what they stated before to abolish nuclear weapons, to stand for the withdraw of nuclear weapons from Germany, and you see once more it is at the bottom more or less on the left hand side of what you see. It is an initiative of the campaign. It is an initiative of IPPNW and of Mayors for Peace.

Once more, I have the feeling in a very prominent way. This is the way we are going to get our members together. That is the way how we want to stimulate our members and in the same way for civil society organizations, it is a way to mobilize their own forces. Even the peace movement in Germany is still going to explore how they can express themselves. And they are looking for young people, and when we heard about our friends in Ypres, the young generation is taking over. Yes, we have to do it in the peace movement in Germany as well. So we are creating new chapters of young people and students in most of the Mayors for Peace cities by now so that we have a good interlinkage between cities and their citizens on that particular topic. I am really looking forward to the future and part of the future, as it was mentioned a moment ago, is of course with regard to regionalization of Mayors for Peace, having regional conferences with friends from other countries, and we heard about the Mediterranean, and in the upcoming year there is a big chance to have a larger conference of mayors in Sarajevo to commemorate the 100 year start of WWI. And even that would be a collaboration of civil society organizations and members of Mayors for Peace. I am happy that Monsieur Cibot and Mayor Straub did sign the letter of support to the proposal and am looking forward to what is going to happen there. Thank you very much for having had the chance to present here and good luck for our conference. Thank you.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Paul for giving us all this good information and hints and tips on what we can do. That was really very, very inspiring. If there is anybody in the audience that has questions now or would like to make comments directly, there is an opportunity for it now. So please raise your hand. In the very back? Please, you can present yourself.

**Mr. Adrian Glamorgan, Representative of the City of Fremantle, Australia**

It is Adrian Glamorgan from the city of Fremantle representing the mayor there in Australia. Australia is an unusual place in that local governments cannot say anything about nuclear power plants being built. We don't have any yet. But we do have uranium mining and the Australian government has decided to sell uranium to India, which is not a member of the non-proliferation pact. It is exploring selling uranium to the United Arab Emirates to help the cause of peace in the Middle East, and it has contaminated the prefecture of Fukushima with Uranium there. The Aboriginal people in Western Australia, where I live, divided because they are not allowed to say no to uranium being mined. If they say no, they cannot negotiate with the mining companies. Under native title law, they have to say, "Yes, we want uranium to be mined. Now can we negotiate with you?"

So their civil rights are being abused. The workers' rights are being abused. We are having uranium sold to India and China which frees up nuclear weapons to be made out of domestic Indian and Chinese uranium. So the connection between nuclear power and nuclear weapons is really strong. But there are no ways that currently we can politically stop nuclear weapons being made in other countries or being freed up to. So I am sorry it is a long question but I am leading to this point. We have talked a lot about peace and it has many forms. But the only form of peace that is left for many people in Australia is non-violent means to oppose at the mines, on the railway lines, at the ports to stop uranium contaminating other countries.

We have been promised that uranium is safe and I have been to Fukushima and I have seen the Geiger counter levels are way higher than what the Japanese government says. So what is a local government to do to peacefully abide by international obligations to prevent nuclear war, to prevent the contamination of other people's lands, and to prevent the abuse of Indigenous people's rights. Is there potential for cooperation between uranium producing countries and the cities and those cities in India, China, and Japan which unfortunately take uranium and they are turned into fissile material in factories that also create electricity? Thank you.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you. I take that as an independent statement but would you like to comment?  
No?

**Mr. Schneider**

If I don't have to. I would do it in private but not on stage probably.

**Mr. Vestby**

Okay. I do not see any other hands in the air. That means that we thank Paul for the presentation. Now we move onto the next one on the list and we are moving to England. Mr. Sean Morris. He is principle policy and research officer in Manchester. Please Sean.

**Mr. Sean Morris, Principal Policy and Research Officer of Manchester City, UK**

Konnichiwa. As Mayor Vestby says, I have been for the past five years Manchester's officer responsible for Mayors for Peace cooperation and I am also the secretary of the UK and Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities. What I want to follow on a little bit from what Paul has just said and give you a bit of a flavor for the UK and Ireland's elements of how we might create a regional group in there. And some of the issues and problems you may have, to think about really as well.

Since the creation of the 2020 Vision Campaign, Manchester a few years ago with the then elected mayor of London set up a working group. This met twice a year and it was chaired by the deputy elected mayor of London. So they had a very executive role and I will go onto that issue about executive roles as well in a minute. That went reasonably well but then there was a change in mayor in London and so they weren't as interested then. We now work more with our great sister city, our Scottish friends in Glasgow who are also – and have just become in the last couple of years – members of the 2020 Vision Board as well as associate members. So they are developing leadership issues in Mayors of Peace so it is a good liaison that we have with them.

The working group has been meeting up for about seven or eight years. It meets twice a year, mainly in Manchester, but it has also met in the likes of Glasgow, Birmingham, Oxford, and in London, and in Leeds. The group's administered by me. Now I am specifically contracted for 20% of my time to work Manchester's local peace policy. That was agreed in 2005 and Manchester is fairly unique in the UK for having an official peace policy. Past that peace policy is the work I do for the nuclear free local authorities. But also it is the peace work. We have a Manchester peace trail and we are working a European project on that area with seven of the European cities. We have an annual peace festival and we have a peace history conference which this year will be on International Peace Day. So as part of that peace work, I always attend the board meetings and have been to all the NPT conferences in the last five years as well. I also organize, when we are not in Hiroshima, we also organize annual Hiroshima Nagasaki

memorial ceremonies which are held always on the 9th of August so that we can read out the peace declarations at the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And we always link again with local NGOs to develop those. Since 2010 when the Mayor of Nagasaki made the civic visit to Manchester, we have now very kindly given an A-bomb exhibition and that has been sent all around the country, so far 15 cities around the UK and in the Republic of Ireland. A very useful peace education tool for us.

Having said all that, the bulk of work though is actually not for Mayors for Peace, it is for Nuclear Free Local Authorities. That is a local government group of about 50 fee paying councils. And they are not just concerned about the developments of nuclear weapons, they are very interested and probably predominantly interested in the nuclear power issue, nuclear energy, waste management, and the safety and issue policy as well. But in terms of our nuclear weapons work that we do there, we have a very close cooperation with Mayors for Peace and I am very much mandated by and delighted to be here as much as I am by Manchester. The good thing about that is they pay generous fees depending on their population.

So I have an inbuilt advantage there over most cities that I get paid quite reasonably well by the cities to do the work that I do. So I can use that a little bit to develop Mayors for Peace locally as well. This is all done and headquartered in Manchester itself. It could be argued that our working group is the beginnings of what could become a more official chapter now that we have agreed to that yesterday. But I foresee some real problems and issues for us in developing a chapter which I felt would be useful to bring forward to you. One is resource based and the other is trying to develop a much deeper membership because we have a much more peculiar nature in the UK in terms of the way mayors work which creates real issues for us in trying to develop a very dynamic local group.

In terms of resources, I am only contracted one day a week to work for Mayors for Peace, which doesn't give me a lot of time to do very much of creating a deeper organization. We have started in recent years to develop voluntary invoices, but we have only had fairly limited success in that. We also in the past managed to get some charitable trust funds to get a development advisor to try to deepen membership by understanding what our members might want really. And we are continuing that in the future. But to build up a local chapter and make an effective and vibrant local organization, we are going to need significantly more local resources than we currently have. Through we have got two meetings a year for almost 10 years, our meetings

basically we get mail, the NGOs come in, the local host council, and maybe a few of us. It is not a very dynamic organization at the moment and it is something that is a real issue for us. That comes in a sense because of the name of the organization. Mayors for Peace is probably great in most countries but in the UK and Ireland we have about eight directly elected mayors.

All of the mayors are ceremonial in nature. They feel like the first citizen of the council. They chair the council meetings, they might open events, they might be promoting local charities, they do come from the political groupings and it is usually rotated, and they are only in office for a year so there is absolutely no continuity therefore. Also when they are mayor of their city or town, they are supposed to remain independent and not get involved in political campaigning. So you have a major dilemma of how we actually can move on with Mayors for Peace. Scotland has a slightly easier arrangement. They are still ceremonial in nature, but they usually have four year terms so at least you have some continuity in Scotland in that sense. But for the rest of the UK and Ireland, it is a major problem to deal with that.

We are very pleased and interested in the Japanese move in that covenant to call themselves Mayors and leaders of peace because it is probably going to be a more easy and effective year to do that in the UK and Ireland because in the end it is our leaders that are our mayors in that sense. That and the executive nature of the council and they are the people that make the big decisions if you like.

In the UK and Ireland, it will probably be for billing up a chapter, the resources, both time and finance, coupled with this issue around mayors not having an executive role. This will also make it harder to attract finance, because again, at the moment, the people and the secretariat in Hiroshima is contacted, don't really have any control of budgets so it is going to be a major issue to start with in terms of how we move forward then really.

At our last meeting we held in London, it was agreed to do a questionnaire of all our membership to see what they wanted. How did they want to see Mayors for Peace grow? How did they want to deepen membership and so on. We had some very good comments and we are going to continue that after we get back from Hiroshima. And then we hope to launch our national chapter later in the year in Manchester. We are particularly interested in these issues at the moment so we are going to be doing that. In terms of following some discussion and dissemination of our questionnaire and getting a great idea of what our members want really.

Now if you may have guessed, Manchester is strongly political committee to Mayors for Peace and it will do all it can to develop it further in the UK and Ireland and to our international cooperation and the executive board. In the UK and Ireland local government has though seen major budget cuts, as many places in Europe and many places around the world have. We have had a 30% cut in budgets in the last 4 years alone. After the next general election in 2015, another 10% cut has already been announced. It is very hard within those restrictions to be able to start asking for even small amounts of money. And I know this is going to be an issue in Spain, in Greece, in Italy, and many other countries as well.

That does not make for an easy way forward. You look into developing a strong regional chapter. We have some sort of views in which I would like to put forward, not just in a local sense and create a national chapter, but at the international level as well. We feel very strongly that Mayors for Peace should be looking to develop partnerships with philanthropists and groups like the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Carnegie Fund foundation and so on, and to develop links for charitable trust to do specific project work. That will be one way to generate new income. In terms of membership fee, 2,000 yen is about 20 pounds in the UK. It would just not be practical to be trying to ask for that sort of money in a place like London or Birmingham or Manchester. So we have set a figure of about 120 pounds, 130 euros, and from the questionnaires we've got has been seen as a reasonable amount. That in the UK would raise about 1,000 pounds which would give us a bit more flexibility to start developing more resources and more stuff, and so forth; time into it as well.

At Mayors for Peace, we believe at the local, national, international level does really need to build up a fundraising capacity. It should not be just about asking the members to try and put their hands in pockets which are afraid at the edges really as well. Where there really is the name of the organization, and the prestige of this organization should be there to be able to find ways to make significant amounts of money which can help the building of national chapters and can support them as well. One of the things that has come out from our questionnaires very clearly is what will you get for your money? And I think that has got to be thought about in terms of the organization. You have to give a product to them. It is important to have a political commitment, but you also need to be able to determine what are you going to get for the services that you are providing for what you are becoming a member really.

For Manchester, we are worried whether we can fulfill completely the aims and objectives and the vision of the national chapter in the short term but we will work very hard in the medium term to try to build that up as quickly as possible. Mayors for Peace is a great and good international name and reputation. But as I've known it before, its name is actually a problem for its development in our country. So again, we are going to look at the Japanese model as a possible way forward really. Any change we need to do has got to be fairly slow and gradual and we will not be able to, as they say, build Rome overnight in that sense.

Mayors for Peace has a lot of potential to continue to grow but it has needed a structure revolution and we are very pleased with the decisions and the structural changes being made that were agreed on yesterday. Developing chapters has to be a two way process. Hiroshima and the executive cities need to talk close with each other and the international secretariat, the 2020 Vision secretariat, and the executive in general has to listen to individual members and their needs, and potential financial supporters. I believe there is a potentially large reservoir of funds available, but Mayors for Peace needs to prioritize fundraising much more in the same ways it has done so effectively within the United Nations on a diplomatic field. If it can put some of its attention into that, I think it will become a much more effective organization in the long term.

I do sincerely believe national chapters can deepen the membership for Mayors for Peace and make a much more effective organization but it will be difficult and it will take time. However, if it works well, we will all benefit from it and so will the nuclear weapons disarmament movement. Arigato gozaimasu. Thank you for listening.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Sean. We will now have three speakers from Japan but I can tell you that coming from lunch we have now already reaching the break. We will probably arrange something about that. In the schedule coming up so we will see but by saying that I urge you to maybe minimize your speech if possible. Now I call upon Mayor of Hirakata. Is he here? He is coming. Please. Next mayor is mayor of Ayabe.

**Mr. Osamu Takeuchi, Mayor of Hirakata, Japan**

Osamu Takeuchi, mayor of Hirakata, Osaka. It is a good honor for me to be given this opportunity to speak. I am the vice president of the national council of Japan nuclear free local authority and the president of the organization is Mayor Taue of Nagasaki. In 1984 in August, in Hiroshima, Fuchu, with 19 authorities, the organization was

established. There are 286 local governments participate every time we send a letter of request for each nuclear testing and we have been conducting various events for peace. Hirakata City is one of the founding members and has served as the vice president. Talking about our city of Hirakata, it is in the eastern part of Osaka bordering Kyoto and Nara. It is in the middle of Kyoto and Osaka and the population today is 400,000. This is a bit down. The population used to be 40,000. It was a rural city, but coming into the 20th century, the Japanese army built many military factories so Hirakata became a town amid the production.

On March 1, 1939, there was a big explosion killing more than 700 people. This was an explosion at the ammunition plant and people said that even from Kyoto they could see big smoke coming up from the factory. After the war, there was a plan to start the military plans in Hirakata. However, citizens pursuing peace had shown determination not to have that kind of factory again. Citizens and the council worked together for protesting, and the plan was abolished. Instead, hospitals and the largest residential development started. Thanks to the efforts for citizens and the council, Hirakata turned into a safe place for citizens instead of a town of military industry. With a strong wish that the memory of war should be maintained, Hirakata became the first city to announce the nuclear free zone in order to say that we are against nuclear weapons.

On March 1, when we experienced the big explosion of the factory, we always have a ceremony related to peace. We send elementary school students to Hiroshima for school excursion when they are going to graduate from the school. And here I am with a strong wish for peace and disarmament. It is more than 60 years from the A-bombing but still, the world is threatened with nuclear weapons. Without the realization of world peace, there would be no prosperity and happiness for humanity. Like Mayors for Peace, Hirakata supports the 2020 Vision and the Hiroshima-Nagasaki protocol which leads to the abolition of nuclear weapons. As vice chairman of the National Council of Japan Nuclear Free Local Authority in 2010, I visited the US, I attended the 2020 Vision Conference held by Mayors for Peace on May 4. As a member of Mayors for Peace, I demanded that specific negotiations be held at the review conference for the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Since coming back, inviting the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we held a symposium for peace education for the future generations. The peace for a future without nuclear weapons must be guaranteed for the children and we pledged and issued an urgent appeal. This was mostly adopted by all the participants. We must not forget

the memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We have to protect the citizens from the threat of nuclear weapons. This is not an issue of the past. This is an issue of today and tomorrow. Our children, future generations should not be threatened with the nuclear weapons. Because Hiroshima inspired Hirakata to have a peace based city building, we continued to demand eternal peace.

It is quite important that the citizens would share opportunity to think deeply about peace on the matter first on Hirakata peace day. Citizens and the elementary school students write a message of peace on a candle with a cup. Hiroshima is where the elementary school students go and after returning from Hiroshima, the children issue messages for peace. This is what we do for the event called Candle Lights for Peace. As the vice president of the National Council of Japan Nuclear Free Local Authority and as the mayor of Hirakata City, I would like to do my best to be a leader in the activity towards these as I have done in the past.

At the Mayors for Peace, with the direction towards regionalization, I am sure that the members would be more active in each region more than ever with a strong determination together with Hiroshima and Nagasaki and together with all of you I would like to work towards peace and a world without nuclear weapons. In this conference, there is a booth of Hirakata City, please come and visit the booth of Hirakata City. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Mr. Takeuchi. As I said, mayor of Ayabe, please come to the podium. I am asking Mayor Musashino to be prepared.

**Mr. Zenya Yamazaki, Mayor of Ayabe, Japan**

Thank you very much. My name is Zenya Yamazaki, mayor of Ayabe City. I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a presentation in front of you. Our city declared ourselves a world federalist city and our city and myself is serving as the chairman of the National Council of World Federation Cities in Japan. This is the first time for me to be president in this general conference of Mayors for Peace. But indeed, this is a great occasion for me to be able to deepen the solidarity with likeminded mayors of the world.

The purpose and objective of the Mayors for Peace and the World Federalist Movement have certain commonalities so please allow me to give you just the activities of the

World Federalist Movement. Now what is this? The World Federalist Movement is a peace movement that advocates the formation of a global federalist system. In other words, a world federation to address and resolve global issues such as cross border conflicts and environmental problems. Such global level issues cannot be resolved by any one state. Such a system of a world federation if established will enable us to cope with international conflicts in accordance with law and not through forces or the forces of arms. In other words, such conflicts can be resolved through world law and facilitate the process of achieving world peace, alleviating poverty and resolving human rights issues.

This whole idea goes back to a great philosopher Kant. But specific movements in this direction began based upon the soul searching of the tragedy of world wars, specifically the A-bombing on Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their horrendous tragedies. As a way to save or avert human annihilation from the use of nuclear weapons, this world federalist movement was proposed. Especially Dr. Einstein and Dr. Bertrand Russell, those scientists made a strong position in supporting such a notion. The headquarters of the World Federalist Movement is situated in New York. As one of the ways to promote the world federalist movement, we promote the declaration of a world federalist city. And for the first time in Japan in 1950, Ayabe City made this declaration as the world federation city. And because of this, we are serving as the president of the national council.

In Japan at the moment, about 250 local authorities have made this declaration and they form national council or world federation cities in Japan. Among us, we exchange information and also 100 yen or 1 dollar donation by the public employees of local governments for the refugees and world peace, and also we promote projects for the World Federation Movement and peace activities. As part of such activities, our city has been engaged in the Middle East Peace Project. Under this project, the Middle East Peace Project, our city started this in 2003 and we in total invite 10 children from Palestine and Israel each and host them in our city. Those are the children orphaned in the Middle East conflict and by definition they are in opposition with the sense of hatred against each other, but we bring children from Palestine and from Israel to Japan for the local stay so as to allow them to have a sense of understanding towards each other.

Israel and Palestine peace building in the Middle East mired and bogged down in conflict would lead us to global peace. Ayabe City embarked upon this project for the first time in 2003 in Japan and since then the world federation cities in Japan have taken

turns to host this project. A part of the operational expenses are allocated from the 1 dollar donation. This year, Kyotango City in Kyoto Prefecture is going to host this project from August 8 this summer, inviting 10 children each from Palestine in Israel. In the host city, the local governments and the concerned citizens and NGOs organized a local executive committee for the execution of the project. We keep a thorough neutral position and promote genuine exchange between these two groups of children through the project and in the host city in Japan, they try to understand each other deeper and try to foster a genuine sense of friendship. In certain cases, such encounters and exchanges do have a moving impact on the people involved.

Culture and customs differ between Palestine and Israel and these children associate each other and enjoy homestay. In Japan, it is also different from culture and customs and interaction is conducted through the language of English. But Japanese host families, as is often the case, are not good at conversing in English. Of course these children get exposed to different foods, sushi, or noodles which are a particular summer food we enjoy, especially using bamboo pipes through which noodles run through, a kind of very fun event. And these children have to work together with each other going beyond the hatred so that they can work and be friends with Japanese host families who are not very good at speaking English. Otherwise they may not know what they are actually eating because they are eating Japanese food for the first time.

They land at Kansai International Airport first and in the previous project they went back on the same plane. In Tel Aviv Airport after one week of absence, they got reunited with their parents. Often the case, the parents wanted to take their children back to home immediately, but actually Palestinians who have to go through a more lengthy immigration process, the children from Israel often ask their parents that they want to wait for the clearance of the immigration procedure for their Palestinian friends and they ask their parents they wanted to wait and actually waited for three hours until their friends from Palestine really did come through the immigration gates.

One thing I can never forget is a word spoke by one Israel boy. "Before I came here, I thought I would never be able to make friends with Israel boys, but after one week in Ayabe City in Japan, yes indeed it might be difficult for my parents' generation to make friends with each other, but now I spend once a week with the people from Israel. In my generation, I have filled a kind of possibility of realizing the Middle East peace in our generation." Ayabe City is a small city but this is one way we are pursuing as a contribution to the realization of global peace. That is one experience which really made

me feel that we are contributing in this manner. Indeed the peace building around the world is a road full of difficulties but we should never allow the reputation of the folly in the form of nuclear weapon use. That must be the goal all of human kind must try their best to pursue. Each city may only have limited power and capacity but sharing the ideal of global peace, helping each other going forward step-by-step. We often say that one drop of water can become a big river and a big ocean they are accumulated. In this manner I think we can become a very big force in the world. Each one of us has a limited capacity but it doesn't mean that we have no power or capacity at all. Let us move forward together. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mayor Yamazaki. As introduced, the mayor of Musashino. Yes, please.

**Mr. Morimasa Murakami, Mayor of Musashino, Japan**

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. I am Morimasa Murakami, Musashino City Mayor of Tokyo Prefecture. I thank you for allowing me to participate in the Mayors for Peace General Conference and as the mayor of Ayabe City mentioned, he joined the National Council of World Federation, the National Council of Cities, and we are a member of this national council also. We are one of the nuclear free peace state declarations and we are also a member of local authorities trying to depart from the world of nuclear and with those ideals, we have been engaged in peace development. I would like to thank you for this precious opportunity to make a presentation in front of you.

First I would like to talk about what our peace measures have been in collaboration with citizens. Musashino City is in the center of Tokyo Prefecture, 140,000 population, and 110 sq km., very compact, and it has very good transportation access and is one of the livable cities in Tokyo Prefecture. However, our city was home to a major military plant, Musashino Plant of Nakajima Aircraft Company, before and during WWII. This plant mainly manufactured engines for military aircrafts including Zero Fighter Planes. This was one of the largest military plants in Asia, employing more than 50,000 people, including mobilized students at the peak time.

This plant was targeted and heavily bombed by US aircrafts, 9 times from the first air raid, in mainland Japan by B29 bombers, which took place on November 24, 1944, after the fall of Saipan until the end of WWII. More than 200 people were killed in the plant

alone and hundreds of other lives were lost in the surrounding areas, including children. Musashino City doesn't have such a history of air raids and in 1960 we declared a world federation city and we made the Nuclear Free Peace City Declaration in 1982. Ever since then we have promoted various peace related learning and international exchange programs to pass on the reality and attach experience of the war to young generations and to enhance the awareness of citizens, which together with the citizens we have been engaged in various peace related activities, especially on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Nuclear Free Peace City Declaration. The peace event executive committee was set up by citizens, representatives, and peace organizations in our city in 2007. This executive committee has organized various events such as final exhibition about A-bombing, publication of peace maps, lecture meetings, among others for awareness raising for peace, especially now that 68 years have passed since the end of the war, the number of citizens who have witnessed the war is declining. Our city therefore recognized the important urgency of passing on their experiences and published Musashino's records that were experienced twice, based upon one experience told by our citizens. Our city will continue to collect more experience and share the lessons of history with the younger generation.

This peace event executive committee consists of diverse members such as peace activity organizations and university students and the parents of students in schools. The committee conducts various events in the month of constitution in May, summer peace events in August, and a peace day memorial event in November. In 2011, our city submitted to the city assembly a draft of Musashino City Peace Day Ordinance to designate November 24, the day when our city was first attacked from the air as peace day based upon a proposal from a peace measure roundtable conference organized by intellectuals. This peace day is a campaign pledge of me as mayor during the election campaign.

Today, this peace day is observed every year on November 24 and I would like to propose that throughout the 365 days, this will be full of peace activities every day. Somewhere in the world, by declaring each day of 365 days as peace day. We believe that it is very import we raise the awareness of children in particular. We organized the exchange events with cities in the United States, Russia, China, and Korea for your exchange with each other. And last year, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Nuclear Free City Declaration, we dispatched the Youth Peace Delegation to Nagasaki City where they took part in a peace memorial service and a youth peace forum and they were able to have a good interaction with the youth from other parts of this country and

they learned first-hand the tragedy of A-bombing. It was truly a fruitful experience for our young people.

Now it has been six years since the executive committee was set up and the involvement of the citizens towards peace activities has been rising. Our city is planning to open the museum of history of our city in 2014. This time the museum is going to feature a permanent exhibition of ancient documents and historical materials, and also war related materials and photo panels. I hope that this exhibition is going to make citizens, especially young children, aware of the importance of peace. We will continue to work with citizens on the challenge of sharing the tragedy of war and the importance of peace to the next generation. Also with the member cities of Mayors for Peace and with the cities in Japan and the likeminded cities around the world, through various opportunities, we would like to spread widely the message for peace. In and out of Japan, nuclear free peace world is what we would like to work together to hand down to our posterity. Thank you.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mr. Murakami. Now we will take a leap to another island, to Sri Lanka. And I call upon the mayor of Sri Jayawardenapura Kotte. It seems that that mayor is not present. Then we will probably try that in the end. Then we are jumping back to Spain. Are you prepared? Talking about the mayor of San Sebastian. Please come to the floor.

**Mr. Juan Carlos Izagirre, Mayor of San Sebastian, Spain**

Konnichiwa. Good afternoon everyone. I just spoke in Basque. Excuse me for that. Mayor of Hiroshima and representatives, participants in the Mayors for Peace Conference, thank you very much. Let me introduce myself. I am the mayor of Donostia-San Sebastian. I think you know our city. There is a state called Basque and we have a Basque ethnic group who are living in the south of France and the north of Spain. The city of Donostia-San Sebastian is about 100 km from Guernica City. In 1937, that city was well-known because of the air raid. That was eight years before the dropping of the bomb in Hiroshima and Nagasaki so now the town is well-known as the symbol of injustice of wars.

Our city became the battlefield between the Portuguese and British armies. So 200 years have passed since the scourge of war and we have commemorative events to express – it is not ceremonies to express the suffering and pain of the wars 200 years ago. We

overcome the devastation of the war so the ceremony commemorates that effort, in the same way I am sure Hiroshima and Nagasaki citizens forward-lookingly rebuilt their city. So we plan to hold a positive ceremony in 2013. Our city, we suffered from war and occupation and violence from several hundred years ago and it still continues.

If we have learned anything from conflict resolution from history, that would be if leaders sign a peace agreement, that will not be enough for building peace. To realize peace, we need many more things. More just and continuous peace can only be achieved if this peace accord will be implemented at the local level. In order to realize peace, we have to change the society that suffers from violence, also in order to achieve peace, we have to have just and free and fair rights of people. Those have to be achieved at the local level. That is important. So we have to think about what we can do at the local level. Mayors who are here with us today, what can we do? Each of us. There are many things that we can do. As mayors of our municipalities, we try to contribute to peace building because we have a moral duty to do so. City councils are the closest political organization to the citizens, so from that point of view, we have the obligation to share other municipalities' experiences to your citizens and then promote dialogue and in a proactive and voluntary manner we have to implement initiatives to promote coexistence and peace. That is an obligation too.

So we must implement collaboration and coexistence activities to make efforts towards resolving conflicts and wars, not just in your own region but also resolving other region's conflicts and problems. In October 2011, we held an international conference for resolution of the conflict of the Basque countries and we have invited world renowned people such as the former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, Mr. Jonathan Powell, Bertie Ahern, Pierre Joxe, and Gerry Adams, and so on. They met with the Basque political, trade union and social figures. This process began at the conference and there are still efforts being made to build peace.

Since then, we have implemented various initiatives to promote dialogue, reconciliation, and recognition of victims. In order to establish democratic coexistence for the future, we have made efforts as well. Our city is a city of peace and human rights. We are committed to these values. Not just conflicts in our cities, we are strongly committed to these values in other cities. Our city, will be the European culture capital in 2016 so we want to call it European Council Peace Capital in 2016, and we want to take this opportunity to further contribute to building peace. It is difficult but I want this momentum to extend to the political field. I have this opportunity to address in front of

you the city council of Donostia-San Sebastian made one resolution to hold an international conference. By doing this at the local level, we want to contribute to peace building.

By holding this international conference at the local level, it will be an opportunity to give us a hint to think about what we can do to contribute to peace building in Basque. Internationally, at different localities, we have various experiences in peace building so utilizing and capitalizing these, we have to realize the citizens' right to live in peace. And then we share experiences with citizens so they can participate in the process of peace building. This conference that I am talking about will be held between October 10 and 11. There will be many working groups and various city mayors from different countries are expected to be participating. Of course many mayors will be participating and experts will come to this meeting so I sincerely, from the bottom of my heart, would like to invite you to this conference. I would like to pay tribute to your wonderful achievement and results you have made so far. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Juan Carlos. Is a representative from the city of Wageningen in here? From the Netherlands? You are ready? Very good.

**Mr. Ed Marc Dumrese, European Network Place of Peace, Wageningen, Netherlands**

It is hard to grasp the attention as one of the last speakers but I will give my try. Members of the network of Mayors for Peace, representatives of the different organizations, thank you for the opportunity for the honorable occasion to speak here. Thank you for the invitation from the Mayor of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to be here. My name Ed Dumrese, I am from Wageningen, a city in the Netherlands. I think I am the only representative of the Netherlands here today, here. And as well I am also the vice president of the European Network of Places of Peace. Wageningen is a city where the calculation of the German forces were assigned to the Canadian forces on the 5th of May, 1945, and we commemorate this event nowadays with many people involved and with all kinds of activities.

We have a military parade with veterans coming over because the capture was an international event at the end of Operation Market Garden, and we have veterans coming over from Canada, Poland, the United States, and Britain, but from France and Belgium, and sometimes also from other countries, like last year from Russia, we

celebrate the commemoration every year together with resistance fighters and different organizations. These days of course it is one day of the commemoration, once in a year. But during the day we have all kinds of activities, educational programs, and conferences with schools but also at the University level.

Wageningen is not the only city where a peace treaty in Europe has been signed. If you look and dig in the history of Europe, you will see that there are many cities and conflicts where peace treaties have been signed. We just recently started to organize ourselves in the European Network Places of Peace. Our head office is in Portugal and we already have many members from Europe participating but also new members. Just recently Israel joined as a new member at the network.

What combines these cities? The city feels a moral obligation to commemorate the past. This obligation urges us to work also on peace issues in the future. I want to other cities also to work with us to share the heritage and the experiences we have and look forward to how we can work together because the history is getting to be part of our heritage. The history of wars is part of our heritage, of our culture, and our entity. The European Network of Places of Peace is developing all kinds of activities. For instance, the European peace routes which are sometimes physically but also digitally accessible so that these memory sites which we have all over Europe are getting more and more accessible.

Other activities which we are having quite soon actually is on the 9th and 11th of October. It will be the peace conference in Wageningen with the subject of post conflict, cultural heritage, and regional development. Many cities were heavily burdened by wars and conflicts in the past. Often the scars are visible in the cities and landscapes and monuments are silent witnesses. In the process of learning how to deal with the past, we see different stages, from the victims, the family members, the successors, but also politicians and they are redefining their position throughout the decades after the conflicts. While at first people focus on surviving and getting their lives together, later they confront themselves with the unresolved past.

After the second and third generations also get involved in these kinds of processes. We experience this every year on the 5th of May in Wageningen but also in many other cities where we work together with the European Network of Places of Peace. And there are many sociological and anthropological studies who are describing these kinds of processes. There are also other places. There are some conflicts in the past which are

ignored and they don't play any part of the collective memory if you look back into history. But on the other hand, there are cities where they sometimes get heritagized, which means that they are a part of the social, political, or military legacy. As such, they serve different purposes and aims. Sometimes they are for the better and sometimes for the worse. The heritage of complex often results in changes of identities and awareness of the past. It is important for policy makers and for the non-governmental organizations to understand these processes. That is why we organize the conference soon in Wageningen.

Citizens and especially survivors often feel the urge to commemorate the victims and, in a sense, a moral obligation to raise awareness for reconciliation and peace, as the past can as well be a breeding ground for new conflicts. Don't forget about that. Remarkable is that the parents of these processes can be recognized but that cities and memory sites are often alone, dealing with their heritage. A network like the European Network of Places of Peace, but maybe also Mayors for Peace, can help channeling these processes. Cities with comparable issues can exchange the best practices and learn from each other's experiences. Building a network to commemorate the violent conflicts and the victims of the past preserve the heritage and actively involve citizens from the bottom up. It is a good instrument for reconciliation and to prevent future conflicts and eases the traumatic past. I want to also mention the non-governmental organizations who are playing a very important role in that as well.

The European Network of Places of Peace combines cities where peace treaties are signed and terrible conflicts are fought. These cities tried to build on the heritage of war and violence, a culture of peace by commemorating the past and engaging in peace activities for future activities. So I am looking forward to working with the Mayors for Peace and thank you very much for the opportunity to being here.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mr. Dumrese. We have three more speakers. We will jump to Turkey and I call upon the mayor of Diyarbakir. The podium is yours.

**Mr. Osman Baydemir, Mayor of Diyarbakir, Kurdistan, Turkey**

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. Mr. President, thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. First of all, I would like to say I am so sorry. I know my English is not good enough to talk about this important topic. But I have to try and have to say some words from my heart, from my country, and from my population.

**Mr. Vestby**

I think you are doing very well.

**Mr. Baydemir**

My name is Osman Baydemir. I came from the north part of Kurdistan. And I am mayor of Diyarbakir metropolitan municipality. The Kurds are one of the oldest settled people in the Middle East. Their population today stands at approximately 40 million. The region where they live is separately the borders of four different countries. In other words, Kurdish geography lives within the border of Turkey, Syria, Iran, and Iraq. Having been divided by these borders, having had been on their mother language and cultures. Having not, leave their freedoms, the history of the Kurdish people has been massive tragedy for hundreds of years.

The Kurdish have been the subject of harsh messes such as the one in Halabja where chemical weapons were used—Dersim, Ağrı, Zilan, Qamishlo. The most recent example of this massacre is the Roboski Massacre, 34 Kurdish villages, civilians, were killed, bombed, and torn to pieces on 29 December 2011. This beat the fact that who the massacre was being recorded by cameras. There has been no judicial trials so far. Simply, the Kurds are one of the largest people who cannot speak their language and who cannot celebrate their own culture. Millions of Kurds have had to emigrate, they struggle for their lives. At least 2 million Kurds live in Europe, far from the Kurdish region of the Middle East. We know that Japanese people are extremely developed in robotic technology. I am sure the Japanese are proud of this. 800 years ago, the first robot was made in Diyarbakir where I am the mayor and where I live right now. El-Cezire who is accepted at the forerunner of Robotics, to be more precise, the forerunner of Cybernetics, was living in Diyarbakir. What I am trying to say is that upper Mesopotamia was a region that was pioneering in the fields of philosophy and astronomy. However, the Kurds whose language and culture had been banned, had been receded for centuries.

The Kurds whose language and culture had been banned, had struggled against the administrations which has been forced upon them. The last of these struggles is the one which has been led by the Kurdish political moment in Turkey. 50,000 people have died during these 30 years. 3,000 settlements have been evacuated forcibly, 4 million people have had to immigrate to metropolitan cities of Turkey from Kurdish areas. 17,000 civilians have been the victims of unidentified murders. 10,000 activists among whom

there are mayors and Kurdish politicians. We are still being kept in prison. Right now, 20 mayors, they are my colleagues in prison in the Kurdistan region by the Turkish government.

30 years ago in Turkey, the Kurds were supposedly nonexistent. The Kurdish state did not accept the existence of the Kurds. It named these great people along with its language, culture, and tradition. The Kurds have paid a significant price, one of the 10 most notorious prisons with torture exist in our city of Diyarbakir. The Kurds who have great struggle, prison. We have greatly struggled against massacres and tortures, today use their own language in local administration where they have a voice. The state accepts the existence of the Kurdish today, whose existence was formally denied. However, legislative regulations necessary for a sustainable peace have not yet been made. 10,000 political activists are still kept in prison.

Honorable mayors, all kinds of technology including weapon development and energy production must be abandoned and banned, except for medical treatment purposes. Therefore, the cities should work on common action strategy. Cooperative works should be carried out in order to ban the usage and keeping in stock of nuclear weapons and I would like to express that Diyarbakir would actively like to take part in such activities. Of course humanity would like to live in safety. Living in safety is the most natural right of each and every human being. But safety is not provided via armament, nuclear weapons or wars. Safety is provided with justice and sustained with peace. The local administration should not only serve our electorates. We should take a role in the activities of peace because peace is not only made between states and peace cannot be just left to the mercy of the state. This is the common desire of the family that is humanity. Diyarbakir is the most significant city in terms of culture, art, trade, and politics in the Middle Eastern geography.

We sustain massive work in order to turn Diyarbakir with its multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious structure into the peaceful city of the Middle East, Diyarbakir, being a member in the Committee of City Diplomacy of the United Cities and Local Governments organization would like to play the role of world peace envoy primarily in the peace of the Middle East. Thank you very much again for this opportunity. I would be honored to invite you, valuable participants, to the most ancient city of Mesopotamia, which has been the cradle of civilizations for millennia and has been settled continuously for 8,000 years. Before I say with my deepest regard I would like to ask you how was my English? Anybody understand? Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mayor Baydemir. I said you started out well and you ended well also, throughout the speech. Thank you very much. We are still in the region and now I call upon the mayor of Rwandz. That is a Kurdish region in Iraq. Please.

**Mr. Serwan Abdullah Sereni, Mayor of Rwandz, Kurdistan, Iraq**

Good evening. Mayor Matsui, Mayor Taue, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Serwan Sereni, Kurdish professional musician, violin player. Also I am the district mayor of Rwandz City from the Kurdistan region of Iraq. It is an honor to be participating in this international conference to pay respect to the victims of the tragic events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This important conference brings together participants from over 5,000 cities. We are here today to build peace together, to create a better future, and stand against the proliferation of nuclear weapons. We are here to work hard and support all efforts to prevent a repeat of the acts that shocked the world. We are here to give our unconditional support for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons treaty. Nuclear weapons are a threat to all human and living creatures. And we are here to add our voice and support in asking the United Nations for the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction from all countries around the world.

Dear leaders of peace, the people of Kurdistan just like the people in Japan have suffered tremendously through decades of war and acts of genocide. Today, we are the largest nation without a state due to historical agreements between powerful nations. Our people have been divided among four countries, Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. And its people have been victims of wars and persecution in every way possible. The city of Halabja which is located at the northeastern side of Kurdistan on the Iraq/Iran border has witnessed one of the worst atrocities in human history. It was bombed with chemical weapons by Saddam Hussein's regime in 1988 and over 8,000 innocent civilians were killed. Hundreds of our towns and villages have been destroyed and attacked with chemical weapons. Tens of thousands of our people have fallen victim to the Al-Anfal Campaign, genocide by Saddam's regime.

Today I am representing the city of Rwandz which is one of Kurdistan's most beautiful and historical cities. Rwandz was once the biggest emirate, which was known as Soran Emirate during the 18th century. It has one of the richest heritages and culture in the Middle East and attracts tourists from all over Kurdistan and beyond. In the 20th century, Russia, Britain, and Turkey conquered Rwandz. They used every single type of weapons against the inhabitants of our city, including chemical weapons for the first

time in 1944. After the establishment of Iraq as a country in the 1920s, Rwanda was once again attacked and destroyed.

During Saddam Hussein's era in the 1980s, heinous crimes were committed in the city and the surrounding towns and villages. All the villages were ruined, burned, and its people imprisoned and dispersed in other parts of Iraq. Our economy and every other type of infrastructure in this city and nearby sub-districts were completely demolished. In spite of all of our sufferings and sacrifices, we have given in this struggle in the past against the oppressive regimes. The Kurdistan regional government now is trying to form friendships with our neighboring countries and the international community at large. We are doing all that we can to move forward day by day to rebuild and improve the infrastructure and economy. Not only for this generation but many generations to come.

My dear friends and peacemakers of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki events, the attack against the heart of your nation made us feel the pain too. But in respect of our different history, Japan and Kurdistan have been able to rise again and give the rest of the world reflections in the meaning of life and survival. In this view, the friendship, peacemaking, and beauty of life are making us turn together to prevent any similar tragedies in the future. Let us all work together to eliminate any signs of massacres. We as Kurds see that we must put all our energy and efforts to succeed in this struggle and work hand in hand in this conference for the sake of creating a world filled with peace, far from weapons of mass destruction. All of these efforts will come through by the hard work of civil and humanitarian organizations and the United Nations organization for making the world a better place. In closing, you heard from my colleague from Diyarbakir. You will hear from Halabja. I also take this opportunity to call upon you all to do what you can support the Kurdish people, our rights, and our rights to an independent state. Once again on behalf of my fellow citizens of the city of Rwanda and the Kurdish nation, I would like to warmly welcome everybody and thank you very much for this great conference. I would like also to ask you a favor if you can possibly, I will have a letter directed to H.E. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations. If you can sign your support to us, we would really appreciate it. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much District Mayor Sereni. And now last but not least, Halabja was mentioned, now the mayor of Halabja. Please.

**Mr. Khder Kareem, Mayor of Halabja Kurdistan, Iraq**

Konnichiwa minasan. Hello to everybody, honorable president, mayors, and participants. At the beginning I would like to thank everybody who worked very hard to organize this very important conference in this very special place for better cooperation to work for tragic incidents like Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Halabja not to happen again.

I would like to give my special thanks to the mayor of Hiroshima for his kind invitation for us to participate in this conference and mayors from all over the world to be members of Mayors for Peace. And I am also thankful for Mayor Vestby for his participation in the anniversary of the chemical gas attacks on Halabja City this year.

Honorable mayors, we Kurds of Iraq are attending this conference to show the world that the massacres and the Saddam regime, which all Iraqis resent and especially Kurds suffered from as a result of using chemical weapons against us. During the 35 years old Saddam regime, the Kurdish people were forced to lose their identity by this regime. Now I would like to give you some examples of this bloody regime's policies against Kurdish people.

As I mentioned, the policies of blood regimes against the Kurdish people, for example Arabization and assimilation of the Kurdish people and cities. Detention and arresting of the Kurdish people, killing off 182,000 Kurdish civilians and destroying 4,500 Kurdish villages as a part of an operation against the Kurdish people. And the most tragic event during this operation was when chemical weapons made with poisonous gas including sarin, tabun, and mustard gas were used to attack our city Halabja. More than 5,000 innocent civilians were killed and more than 10,000 were injured on March 16, 1988. After this, chemical bombardment, dozens of people suffered from biological disasters, left their place, and found refuge in Iran and other border areas and countries. The chemical weapons which were used against Kurdish people were banned by the international community in 1974.

We as a Kurdish nation which suffered many times from these kinds of chemical weapons are calling and asking for peace in life and peace in the world together. No more Hiroshima, Nagasaki, and Halabja. All of us know that Mayors for Peace has a strong intention to give the world this message that countries must avoid developing, producing, and using chemical and nuclear weapons, especially in the most sensitive area, in the Middle East, where we live. As members of this organization should work with similar organizations and the United Nations towards a peaceful and healthy world for the next generation without nuclear and chemical weapons. At the end, thank you

very much for your participation and cooperation again. And for hoping for peace for everybody. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Vestby**

Thank you very much Mayor Kareem. It is difficult to close the session right after such a strong statement, but that is my obligation. I also have one good reason for doing that because we are over time. By the way, this isn't all over. It is very important so I thank all the speakers and I thank the audience for listening to all of this. This is important stuff. And we shall take all of this with us, consider it more, and do actions when we come home. I guess we are about to close Session III. Again on our time, but I feel at home because every time in my local council, we end later than anticipated and that is because people want to speak and we have been granted the time because these are also very important issues. So thank you very much and now it is some minutes break.