

The 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace

Closing Ceremony

August 5 (Mon), 2013 15:30-16:00

International Conference Center Hiroshima (Himawari)

Closing Remarks: **Fumio Kishida**

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan

*Delivered by Mitsuru Kitano, Director-General, Disarmament
Non-proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign
Affairs*

Donald L. Plusquellic

Vice President of Mayors for Peace

Mayor of Akron, USA

Tomihisa Taue

Vice President of Mayors for Peace

Mayor of Nagasaki

Kazumi Matsui

President of Mayors for Peace

Mayor of Hiroshima

MC

Now we would like to commence the closing ceremony for the 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace. First we would like to invite Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida for greetings.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Delivered by Mitsuru Kitano, Director-General, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan

I am Director-General Kitano, Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I would like to read out Mr. Kishida's message.

The president of the general conference, Mayors for Peace, and distinguished guests, and all the participants. In light of the significance of this general conference, I wish to attend myself. However, unfortunately I was not able to do so. So please let me have Director General Kitano, Department of Disarmament, Nonproliferation, and Science carry my message. I appreciate your understanding. From not only within Japan but also from overseas, thank you for coming to Hiroshima, which is my hometown as well as a city which experienced the atomic bombing to attend the General Assembly of Mayors for Peace, held every four years for the purpose of abolishing nuclear weapons to achieve eternal peace for the world.

We are the only atomic bombed country and therefore we know the reality of nuclear weapons used better than any other nations. It is our mission to convey the catastrophe of Hiroshima and Nagasaki beyond generations and national boundaries. We aim to cultivate proper understanding of nuclear weapons use and its humanitarian impact as the starting point for further international nuclear disarmament initiatives. In April 2014, NPDI Foreign Ministerial Meeting will be held here in Hiroshima on that occasion to spread the awareness of inhumanity of nuclear weapons to as many nations as possible, we plan to construct messages to be sent out from Hiroshima, a city that experienced nuclear bombing.

Also from a nonproliferation education point of view, in order that we communicate the inhumane impact of the use of nuclear weapons, we appointed the first Youth Antinuclear Ambassador in Hiroshima. I hope that young generations will learn from this what they can do to advance towards a nuclear free world. To achieve a nuclear free

world, not only the government but also all citizens must think about the way forward from all possible different aspects and the Mayors for Peace activities are conducted exactly to that end. Let me thank you again for attending the 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace from Japan and all over the world and I am committed to make steady progress forward with you towards a world free from nuclear weapons. With that I would like to conclude my remarks.

MC

Thank you very much. Next, on behalf of the participants, the vice president of Mayors for Peace, the Mayor of Akron, Mr. Plusquellic, please.

Mr. Donald L. Plusquellic, Vice President of Mayors for Peace, Mayor of Akron, USA

Thank you. To our hosts, Mayor Matsui, other honorable mayors and distinguished leaders, ladies and gentlemen, I am very honored to be here in Hiroshima for my second time to represent the US Conference of Mayors as well as my own citizens. I apologize that I am not the celebrity that Oliver Stone is to appear here to speak in a way that he can do so well in talking about his riveting movies and the things that he does much better than I do to get messages out. But I am here and privileged to join with all of you concerned citizens in this global community. I say global community because here we all realize that we are one people, residents of one Earth, and what happens to one place, to one city, has consequences worldwide.

In today's world, more than any other time, our citizens no matter where they live have the opportunity to travel more than ever. They have more information available. They are linked instantly by international news stories, by the Internet they are provided more information, and it is more available by not only our present day world but our history and how we got to this point in 2013. And yet, I would argue, unfortunately, that many people, especially in my country, are less knowledgeable about our history. They have not taken the time or the energy to learn the lessons that we need, not just about things important in their little world in which they live, but important lessons about how we live together and should live together in this shrinking world.

I would argue that we must know, we must encourage people to learn, not as something nice, but a commitment to learn something that is absolutely a necessity so that we do not make the mistakes that we have made in the past as I said in my first opportunity here in Hiroshima and then in Nagasaki. 60 years or 6 decades or more after any

historical event in the history of the world, all of us can look back and criticize or find fault or blame, but the most important thing is to learn from those tragic incidents, those tragic events, so that we don't make that mistake again and that is why the work that all of you do, all of us, Mayors for Peace, especially provided the leadership by the two outstanding mayors is so vitally important because as opinion makers we can help take those rightful positions to our government leaders and hopefully they will listen and hopefully our citizens will help learn that lesson from past experiences. I cannot stand here and speak for my federal government. In fact, mayors in the United States are very frustrated. We can't get our own federal government to understand the necessity of reinvesting in our cities, to build new bridges and highways and to invest in water and sewer lines, so for me to say here today that somehow I am going to change what goes on in Washington, DC, would almost be funny if it wasn't so shameful.

But I do believe that mayors can help push the discussion. And with over 190 mayors signed up for Mayors for Peace in the United States, we have joined in this effort and I do think that the President of the United States has a philosophical position and opinion that has given us some hope that there may be some progress on this although, again, I cannot speak for him. Global nuclear disarmament in my opinion is something that we should continue to push our leaders because it is possible in our lifetime. And it should not be viewed as just an option, something that would be nice to do, but actually a necessity.

I say this with vivid memory of a young lady, 12 years old, who reminded me so much of my grandchildren and I carry, maybe many of you do when I wonder some days why I do all the crazy things that I do in this very difficult time of being mayor, I always carry pictures of my grandchildren because I want their world to be better. And so it is not in my opinion a nice option for our governments. It is a necessity. Why? For our children and our children's children, which means the future of this world that each one of us cares about. The work of the Mayors for Peace is vitally important, a necessity for the future of our world and I thank you sincerely for the opportunity to join with you in this effort and I especially thank all of you for your leadership in your home countries.

MC

Thank you very much. Next speaker is vice president of the Mayors for Peace, mayor of Nagasaki, Mayor Taue please.

Mr. Tomihisa Taue, Vice President of Mayors for Peace, Mayor of Nagasaki

In the 8th General Conference of the Mayors for Peace end is closing ceremony on behalf of one of the vice presidents, allow me to say a few words. We have had a lot of discussions in the past three days to all the people who are involved in this conference. I would like to express my appreciation. Members of the Mayors for Peace amounted to 5,712. When it goes beyond the level of 5,000 we thought about the ways it means to expand the membership and strengthen our efforts and how each city is able to participate very actively in our organization in the past 2 years we have exhausted our discussion, culminating to this general conference.

We have set the action plans which were approved in the general conference and we were able to share the next step action plan in this general conference. I believe in that sense, the general conference we have just completed was a very important one. In the past three days, personally in my mind, there were two key words which were moving around in my heart. One is no more Hiroshima. For *hibakusha* from Nagasaki, there is Mr. Senji Yamaguchi. Since he was young, he has been appealing as the leader for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

In 1982, he even as the first *hibakusha* who delivered a speech in the United Nations. He had demonstrated by showing his own keloid scars on the face and body in front of the government officials saying, “No more Hiroshima, no more Nagasaki, no more war, no more *hibakusha*.” That was his earnest appeal. On the 6th last month, he passed away. His appeal, his voice can be shared by all of us gathered here because this is the shared goal we have set in our organization. We need to create the nuclear free world and we are going to put our hands together to accomplish that ultimate goal. I think we are able to share that feeling in the past three days. No more Hiroshima. Let us not forget about this word. No more Hiroshima, no more Nagasaki, no more war, no more *hibakusha*.

Another key word is, “Peace from Nagasaki.” This word is the importance of appeal peace. On top of that, in the community, we are going to start the peace building activity. That is how I took it from this word. Peace from Granollers. Peace from Halabja. Peace from Kodaira. Wherever you put your name of the town, this is the very valued and invaluable word. As a mayor, each one of us needs to build up our confidence and create a community where people are able to have a trustworthy relationship among them. At the same time, this Mayors for Peace is the organization, is the gathering of the mayors from different cultures, different challenges and issues, but still we share and build the confidence through the discussion and exchanges of views.

This conference itself is indeed the very important foundation and forum to deepen our understanding, peace from this organization. “No more Hiroshima and peace from Nagasaki,” those are the keywords I was able to always remember through the 8th General Conference of Mayors for Peace. I hope everybody else will be able to share those two key words. Lastly, those who have worked very hard at the back of the stage for the preparation of this general conference, Mayor Matsui, Mr. Komizo, and Mr. Yowasa, and also all the staff members of Hiroshima City, I would like to thank you all. Mayors for Peace General Conference, the next round of the meeting will be held in Nagasaki four years from now. I am very much looking forward to seeing you four years from now. In the coming four years, I hope there will be more and more opportunities to deepen our understanding and confidence before we meet again. Once again, my thanks goes to all of you. Thank you very much.

MC

Thank you very much. On behalf of the organizers, the Mayor of Hiroshima, Mr. Kazumi Matsui, president of Mayors for Peace, will give us a few words of closing.

Mr. Kazumi Matsui, President of Mayors for Peace, Mayor of Hiroshima

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much. This is going to be the real last greeting I am going to deliver to you. In my feeling, I am very happy and feeling relieved that we were able to complete this general conference in such a successful and fruitful manner. This is because we were given such a tremendous support from the member cities, government leaders, NGOs, and all the volunteers and staff concerned who supported this general conference behind the scenes. As Mr. Taue, mayor of Nagasaki, mentioned, we adopted a new action plan and direction of activities. And after this conference, it is going to be the time for us to really act upon what we decided.

On our part, we will try to further expand the membership so that we can gain more power and influence. Especially for Japan, we will try to achieve universal membership of all local authorities in Japan. And through the concerted efforts of all member cities, we would like to further enhance the efforts for nuclear weapons eradication by 2020. Through our work and efforts, citizens, governments, and NGOs, without your support and involvement we will not be able to be successful in our work. Your support and involvement, engagement are essential. In this regard I would like to continue to count upon your understanding and your cooperation. With this, I would like to conclude my words of sincere gratitude. Once again, I would like to thank you very much for your support. Thank you.

MC

Thank you very much Mr. Mayor. With this, all the programs of the General Conference for the Mayors for Peace have been completed. I thank you very much for your kind attendance and active engagement for the past three days.