Mr. Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima and President of Mayors for Peace, visited the US to attend the 87th Annual Meeting of the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) held in Honolulu. The USCM is a nonpartisan association of American cities with populations over 30,000 or more that was established in 1932. During the Conference’s Annual Meeting in June, many mayors get together from all over the US to discuss effective city management policies related to various issues such as international affairs and the environment, among others.
On June 30, Mayor Matsui had the opportunity to deliver a message at the meeting’s plenary luncheon, in which he shared the work of Mayors for Peace and introduced the fact that the hibakusha, whose average age is over 82, continue to passionately appeal for a world without nuclear weapons based on their conviction that “no one shall ever again suffer as we have”. He stressed that, while every one of the nuclear-armed states is spending billions of dollars to modernize and upgrade their arsenals, that money could be much more productively spent to meet the needs of cities and the people who live in them. His five-minute speech was met with applause from more than 300 people in attendance.

During his attendance at the Annual Meeting, Mayor Matsui talked to many US mayors, with whom he shared the hibakusha’s earnest messages for peace and the goals of Mayors for Peace, and asked to join the organization if they had not yet done so. He also took an interview for a local newspaper (see the article in PDF at the link below).

While he stayed in Honolulu, Mayor Matsui visited Punahou School, which is known for being President Obama’s alma mater, to give a presentation to about 130 high school students studying Asian history. In his speech, Mayor Matsui talked about the destruction caused by the atomic bombing and the hibakusha’s commitment to peace and expressed his hope for young people to walk the path forward a world without nuclear weapons. The students listened to the Mayor’s speech intently and asked many questions afterwards.

A detailed report of Mayor Matsui’s trip to Honolulu will be posted on the Mayors for Peace website soon.


Full text of the resolution with the complete list of sponsors (Mayors for Peace website):
http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/ecbn/resolution/20190701.html

On July 1, at the close of its 87th Annual Meeting which was held in Honolulu, HI, the United States Conference of Mayors (USCM) unanimously adopted a sweeping resolution “Calling on All Presidential Candidates to Make Known Their Positions on Nuclear Weapons and to Pledge U.S. Global Leadership in Preventing Nuclear War, Returning to Diplomacy, and Negotiating the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”.

The resolution was sponsored by T.M. Franklin Cownie, Mayor of Des Moines, Iowa which is a Vice-President of Mayors for Peace and a Lead City, and 18 co-sponsors including USCM President Steve Benjamin, Mayor of Columbia, South Carolina and USCM International Affairs Committee Chair Nan Whaley, Mayor of Dayton, Ohio.

The USCM, a nonpartisan association of 1,408 American cities with populations over 30,000, has unanimously adopted Mayors for Peace resolutions for 14 consecutive years. Resolutions adopted at annual meetings become USCM official policy.


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Greetings from the new Secretary General

It is a great privilege for me to extend my heartfelt greetings as I succeed Mr. Komizo as Secretary General of Mayors for Peace and Chairperson of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation.

During many years in the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, culminating with my time as the Ambassador to Bulgaria, I accumulated much experience and expertise as a diplomat. Using these, I am determined to contribute to the development of Mayors for Peace initiatives aimed at the realization of a world without nuclear weapons and the realization of safe and resilient cities.

Looking at the recent international state of affairs, while the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons seemed at the time to present hope for nuclear weapons abolition, international negative factors standing in the way of that goal have continued to increase. Still, I believe nuclear weapons abolition is absolutely possible. My reasoning is that because these weapons were created by us humans, there is no way that we humans cannot abolish them, too. No matter how difficult it seems, we should not give up on the elimination of nuclear weapons.

In order to realize this goal, I believe in the solidarity of civil society, which is of vital importance, and the voice of the people, which creates the momentum to move history forward. In this regard, I am convinced that the role played by Mayors for Peace and the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation has gradually become more and more critical.

I was born and raised in Tokyo, but now that I have taken residence in Hiroshima with my wife, we will treat this city as our second home, and make the spirit of Hiroshima’s citizens our own. I look forward to working together with the people of our member cities, and striving to make next year’s General Conference a great success. I humbly ask for your kind support and cooperation.

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■ Mayors for Peace in Europe reaches 3,000 members
[July 1, 2019]

Mayors for Peace is intensifying its recruitment efforts globally to reach 10,000 member cities by 2020. On July 1, the number of European members of Mayors for Peace reached a record number of 3,000.

Over its 37 year history, the development of Mayors for Peace has kept European municipalities involved at the heart of the organization and in much of its activity. There are at present 3,000 European members in 48 countries. The only continent that surpasses European membership is Asia, at 3,224 members, but of that number 2,748 are in Japan (1,732) and Iran (1,016).

Europe also has the largest concentration of Executive/Lead members in Mayors for Peace: Hannover (Germany), Manchester (UK), Ypres (Belgium), Frogn (Norway), Malakoff and Grigny (France), Granollers (Catalonia, Spain), Biograd na Moru (Croatia), Vologograd (Russia), Sarajevo (Bosnia & Herzegovina) and Cervia (Italy).

<Report by Helena Aranda Mayor, staff of the Catalan Chapter of Mayors for Peace>

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■ Hosting an Intern from Semey at the Mayors for Peace Secretariat
[June 19 – July 2, 2019]

Mayors for Peace has run an internship program since 2014, inviting staff from member cities to the Mayors for Peace Secretariat in Hiroshima City and having them engage in work related to peace and the Secretariat. From June 19 to July 2, the Mayors for Peace Secretariat welcomed Mr. Nurzhan Yessenzholov, Director of Domestic Policy Department of Semey, which is an Executive City of Mayors for Peace and the Lead City in Kazakhstan.

Mr. Yessenzholov participated in a number of activities to learn about the atomic bombing of Hiroshima, including listening to a hibakusha’s eyewitness testimony. He also visited Hiroshima City University and made a presentation about the history of Semey, which was formerly known as Semipalatinsk where the Soviet Union conducted nuclear testings; the health effects caused by the tests; and the city’s efforts for peace and nuclear disarmament.
Mr. Yessenzholov made the following comment about his internship: “Before coming to Hiroshima, I read a lot of materials about the city, its history and about August 6, 1945. However, my view and understanding changed profoundly after staying in Hiroshima. The visit to the Peace Memorial Museum and testimonies by the hibakusha had a significant impact on me. I am glad that Hiroshima is preserving its memories through the museum etc., because it is important not only for Hiroshima, but also for all mankind. When I go back to Semey, I intend to further develop peace activities in Kazakhstan together with the Mayors for Peace Secretariat.”

▼Posts on the Mayors for Peace Facebook page about Mr. Yessenzholov’s internship in Hiroshima:
https://www.facebook.com/mayorsforpeace/posts/2164006177193437?__tn__=-R
https://www.facebook.com/mayorsforpeace/posts/2169335706660484?__tn__=-R

■Mayors for Peace appears as an example of good practice in the new UCLG report ‘Towards the localization of the SDGs’

United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) presented a new report ‘Towards the localization of the SDGs’ during the UN High-Level Political Forum 2019 on sustainable development, which was convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council from July 9 to 18 in New York.

With its theme "Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality", the forum aimed to review in depth the goals 4, 8, 10, 13, 16 and 17 of the SDGs. The goal 16 “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels,” corresponds with the work of Mayors for Peace.

In the new report, Mayors for Peace appears as an example of good practice in steps taken to end violence, promote peace and foster more inclusive cities and territories in order to build inclusive and effective institutions and violence-free environments at the local level: “Rooted in recovering from and preventing atomic bombings and the atrocities of World War II, Mayors for Peace is a network of cities that work for global disarmament. Since 1991, it has also included multidimensional advocacy work on poverty and famine, migration and refugees, human rights, and environmental protection.”

In its Action Plan, Mayors for Peace has designated UCLG as one of the associations of local authorities which we will establish collaboration with.

▼The UCLG Report “Towards the localization of the SDGs”

<Report by Helena Aranda Mayor, staff of the Catalan Chapter of Mayors for Peace>

■Regional Chapter Activities

<German Chapter>
Flag Day of German Members of Mayors for Peace

On July 8, the Mayors for Peace flag was hoisted in front of many town halls in over 300 German cities. The Flag Day, an annual initiative by German members of Mayors for Peace since 2012, is a reminder of a legal opinion handed down by the International Court of Justice on July 8th, 1996, concluding that even the threat of using nuclear weapons is an offence against international law. Flying the flag on this day signifies opposition to nuclear weapons and hope for a peaceful world.

On the occasion of the event, Thomas Hermann, Deputy Mayor of Hannover, a Vice-President City of Mayors for Peace and the Lead City of the German Chapter, has issued a comment: “We know that the nuclear-armed states are modernizing their arsenals. Nuclear weapons are once again playing a greater role in national security strategies. This is a disturbing development.” There is also a growing concern over the denunciation of the nuclear agreement with Iran by the USA as well as the increasingly probable termination of the INF Treaty.

Activity in Hannover on Flag Day (Photo: The City of Hannover)
At the event in Hannover, the guests watched the film “On a Paper Crane” and were invited to fold their own paper cranes, as this is a symbol of hope and healing during challenging times.

<Report from the German Chapter of Mayors for Peace>

▼ Related story on the German Mayors for Peace website in German:
https://www.hannover.de/Leben-in-der-Region-Hannover/Politik/Politische-Gremien/Mayors-for-Peace/Flaggentag/Flaggentag-der-B%C3%BCrgermeister-%C3%BCr-Frieden2

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■ Member City Activities

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< Manchester, UK >

Manchester Metropolitan University unveils Manchester's eighth ginkgo tree from Hiroshima seeds

Since 2015, Manchester City Council has been promoting ‘Project G’, a local educational project focused around the story of the ginkgo tree seeds originating from a mother tree exposed to the atomic bombing in Hiroshima.

On July 1, as part of the ongoing ‘Project G’, a special ceremony was held at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) to unveil the 8th of Manchester's 12 ginkgo trees that have been grown from seeds donated by Hiroshima to Manchester.

The tree was officially unveiled by the Lord Mayor of Manchester. Also present at the ceremony were the Deputy Pro-Vice Chancellor of MMU, the Honorary Consul of Japan, senior councillors and teachers and children from three of the six Manchester Primary Schools involved in 'Project' G, as well as a representative from Manchester Children's Hospital, where Manchester’s 7th ginkgo tree is planted.

As well as planting the tree, the Lord Mayor unveiled a specially designed plaque providing information on the mother tree and giving the tree its own name—for MMU they have chosen the Japanese word 'heiwa'—or 'peace' in English.

Remaining trees are earmarked for MMU’s Heaton Park - the largest park in Manchester - and for a new contemplative Manchester peace garden being developed in Lincoln Square, close to Manchester Town Hall. The Council will continue to work actively on promoting this peace education project.

▼ Full report on Mayors for Peace website:

▼ Link to MMU article on the ceremony (Manchester Metropolitan University website):
https://www2.mmu.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/story/10611/

Manchester International Festival kicks off with Yoko Ono's 'Bells for Peace'

On July 4th, over 4,000 people took part in a mass participation event in Manchester city centre that formally launched the 2019 Manchester International Festival, which takes place from 4 - 21 July and has an eclectic and exciting cultural programme of premieres as well as many community arts events.

'Bells for Peace' was created in cooperation with the internationally renowned artist and peace campaigner Yoko Ono. She invited the people of Manchester to join in Cathedral Gardens to ring in a message of peace to the world. From hand bells to bicycle bells, thousands of celebratory bells from home and abroad joined in ringing and singing out for peace, and to welcome the world to Manchester.

At the event, held in the presence of the Lord Mayor of Manchester, as well as the Leader of Manchester City Council and a representative of the Embassy of Japan, young people cooperated with Yoko Ono to lead an event that included innovative films of Manchester as a city of peace, the ringing of bells to a mantra provided by Yoko Ono and the singing of the Yoko Ono / John Lennon song 'Give Peace a Chance'.

Lord Mayor of Manchester ringing a 'Bell for Peace'
(Photo: Manchester City Council)
<South Ayrshire, UK>

Peace ceremony held by young musicians in Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park

In 2018, South Ayrshire received a donation of seeds from the A-bombed ginkgo tree in Hiroshima by Mayors for Peace. In March this year, inspired by the ginkgo tree, South Ayrshire held an art competition for schoolchildren celebrating peaceful towns. The Ayrshire Fiddle Orchestra was formed to encourage and develop traditional Scottish fiddle music among young musicians in Ayrshire. They visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park during its first Japan tour. Young musicians, ranging from 10-18 years of age, held a peace ceremony in front of the Children's Peace Monument. During the ceremony there was a performance of a specially composed piece: “Lament for the Children of Hiroshima”. Then, the top two drawings from the peace art competition were presented to the Mayor of Hiroshima along with a garland of a thousand paper cranes and other gifts from the Orchestra.

<Tehran, Iran>

“Little Narrators” – a project to pass down the history of chemical weapons attack to children

This year, the Children’s Department of the Tehran Peace Museum launched a new peace education project “Little Narrators” with the cooperation of the Iranian Secretariat of Mayors for Peace. The City of Tehran has been the Lead City of the Iranian Chapter of Mayors for Peace since January 2017.

The project will be held in two cities; Sardasht & Tehran. Sardasht was chosen as the stage for the project’s first phase because of the attack on the city with mustard gas on June 28, 1987. The main objective of this project is raising awareness among children about the effects of Iran-Iraq war by sharing testimonies with them. The project includes schoolchildren collecting testimonies of survivors, then creating paintings based on the testimonies in groups. The paintings were exhibited in Tehran and Sardasht in June this year, on the occasion of the 32nd anniversary of the chemical bombing in Sardasht.

The Children’s Department of the Tehran Peace Museum seeks to develop this project among the Iranian member cities in Mayors for Peace.

<Report by the Children’s Department of Tehran Peace Museum>
Two years ago, on July 7, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted at the United Nations with the support of 122 countries and regions. However, only 23 countries have become signatories to the treaty in the past two years. For a country to join the treaty, a government representative must sign it, and then the country must go through domestic procedures such as approval by its parliament. Less than 20 percent of those countries that initially supported the treaty have gone through these procedures.

The treaty makes it illegal, among other provisions, to possess, produce, or use nuclear weapons. According to the Disarmament Division of the United Nations, 70 countries have signed the treaty. Currently 23 nations are signatories to the treaty, which will enter into force 90 days after a total of 50 countries, which means 27 more countries, have ratified it.

What is the cause of this standstill? Some experts say, “There is pressure coming from the nuclear weapon states.” In fact, an ambassador to the U.N. has alluded to this. On the other hand, what about the government of Japan, the country that suffered atomic bomb attacks? Countries that are under the U.S. “nuclear umbrella,” including Japan, are turning their backs on the nuclear weapons ban treaty.

A number of A-bomb survivors’ organizations and anti-nuclear groups have recently called on the mayor of Hiroshima to urge the Japanese government to sign and ratify the treaty in this year’s Peace Declaration, which will be read out during the annual Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6. Seventy-four years have passed since that fateful day. The number of holders of the Atomic Bomb Survivor’s Certificate has fallen below 150,000, and their average age is now 82.65. The government of Japan must maintain its dignity and take action so that the A-bomb survivors will be able to see the elimination of nuclear weapons during their lifetime.

Please visit the following links to read more peace-related news.
- City of Hiroshima sends names of 814 A-bomb victims to organizations nationwide in search of bereaved families http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=92085
- Number of A-bomb Survivor’s Certificate holders falls below 150,000, average age now 82.65 http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=92062
- Seven A-bomb survivors’ groups to urge Japanese government to sign and ratify nuclear weapons ban treaty http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=92071
- Civic groups call on Hiroshima mayor to urge government to sign nuclear ban treaty in Peace Declaration http://www.hiroshimapeacemedia.jp/?p=92041

Invitation for the Children's Art Competition “Peaceful Towns” 2019

Mayors for Peace places emphasis on peace education to raise awareness among future generations as part of its intensified efforts in the Action Plan from 2017 to 2020, which was adopted at the 9th General Conference. With the aim of further promoting peace education in member cities, Mayors for Peace is pleased to hold its second edition of the children’s art competition on the theme of “Peaceful Towns” targeted at children in all these cities.

Please advertise this competition widely among schools and other organizations in your city. Member cities are asked to accept entries from interested local applicants, select up to 5 artworks for Category I (6-10 years old) and Category II (11-15 years old), and submit the scanned artworks in PDF along with the other required documents by email to the Mayors for Peace Secretariat by the designated deadline.

Details of the competition on the Mayors for Peace Website:

Submission Deadline:
September 30 (Monday), 2019

Submission:
Email the application materials to the Mayors for Peace Secretariat at mayorcon@pcf.city.hiroshima.jp
Request for Payment of the 2019 Mayors for Peace Membership Fee

In order to facilitate future activities and strengthen the sense of solidarity amongst member cities, Mayors for Peace introduced an annual Membership Fee in 2015.

This year again, we ask each member city to pay a Fee of 2,000 Japanese yen (about 19 USD/16 Euro as of March 19, 2019) per city. If your city has not paid their Membership Fee in previous years, we ask your city to pay the total amount owed for each unpaid year since 2015. The collected Membership Fees will be allocated toward new and existing projects listed on the Mayors for Peace Action Plan 2017-2020.

A request for payment of the 2019 membership fee was sent to each city by email on April 1. We deeply appreciate your kind cooperation.

▼ Request for the 2019 Mayors for Peace Membership Fee (The Mayors for Peace website):
http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/outlines/membership_fee.html

Call for Input: Examples of initiatives to foster peace-seeking spirit

The Mayors for Peace Secretariat has been seeking examples of peace education initiatives conducted by any organization (city hall/school/NGO, etc.) in Mayors for Peace member cities that are conducive to raising peace-seeking spirit among future generations. The Mayors for Peace Secretariat accepts reports on a rolling basis, so please send your report whenever your project is completed. The submitted reports will be posted on our website and in the Mayors for Peace News Flash as a source of information for other member cities that are planning to launch their own peace education program.

▼ Call for Input on the Mayors for Peace website:
http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/ecbn/projects.html#section10

Request to Promote Various Measures Based on the Mayors for Peace Action Plan (2017-2020)

At the 9th General Conference of Mayors for Peace held in Nagasaki in August 2017, we decided our Action Plan for up to the year 2020, aiming for lasting world peace. Together, we hope to make significant strides toward realizing this goal. Please promote all appropriate measures based on the Action Plan within your own municipality or regional group.

▼ Mayors for Peace Action Plan (2017-2020):

For example, you can promote the following measures:
Mayors for Peace Collaboration with “The Hibakusha Appeal” Signature Campaign

Based on the Action Plan decided at the 9th General Conference in August 2017, Mayors for Peace is promoting a petition drive urging the nuclear-armed states and their allies to participate in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. It was also decided that in doing so, Mayors for Peace would collaborate with “The Hibakusha Appeal”, a signature campaign launched by the hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Mayors for Peace Secretariat will compile the number of signatures collected and present it to affiliates of the United Nations.

▼ For more information about “The Hibakusha Appeal”:

Mayors for Peace Member Cities - 7,772 Cities in 163 Countries/Regions

Thanks to your invaluable support, on July 1, we gained 11 new member cities, bringing our total membership to 7,772.

From Germany, 3 cities joined thanks to the continued efforts of Hannover, a Vice President City and Lead City of the German Chapter of Mayors for Peace. We also welcomed a total of 8 cities from Austria, Mauritania, the Netherlands, Norway, and South Korea.

We encourage further initiatives to promote membership and can provide support from Hiroshima as needed. Please continue inviting mayors who are not yet members to join Mayors for Peace.

▼ List of New Members (PDF):

▼ Map of Member Cities:
http://www.mayorsforpeace.org/english/membercity/map.html

If you have any comments or questions, please contact us at:
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