

Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference (NGO Session)

Speech in Geneva

Tomihisa Taue

Representative of Mayors for Peace and Mayor of Nagasaki

Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates and leaders of civil groups, my name is Tomihisa Taue and I am the Mayor of Nagasaki. I am deeply honored to have this opportunity to address you today as Vice President of Mayors for Peace, and as representative of the people from atomic-bombed cities.

On August 9th 1945, at 11:02 a.m., an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, just three days after Hiroshima. The city was destroyed and 74 thousand citizens lost their lives while 75 thousand were injured. Sixty-eight years have passed since then, but those who survived the atomic bombing continue to live their lives in fear of cancer and other illnesses.

In the hope that no one in the world will ever have to undergo such experiences again, atomic bomb survivors have continued to talk about their painful experiences and demand the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Now, more than ever, we need to listen to the voices of these atomic bomb survivors. Their voices are “warnings” sent out to all global citizens by people who were forced to endure suffering from which there was no escape.

Furthermore, until now nuclear weapons have been discussed from the points of view of national interests and military power. The pursuit of global security based upon nuclear deterrents, however, has conversely increased the danger of terrorist organizations and politically unstable nations possessing nuclear weapons. We need to face up to reality and understand that only “a world free from nuclear weapons” can guarantee lasting safety for the international community.

In March this year, the International Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons was held in Oslo. Atomic bomb survivors were very pleased that nuclear weapons have finally been recognized as inhumane and that the international community has begun to listen to what they have been saying.

Atomic bombings cause genetic abnormalities from radiation and survivors are forced to live their lives in fear of developing leukemia and other types of cancer. From a medical viewpoint, nuclear weapons are “gene-targeting weapons.” Moreover, nuclear weapons can bring about climate changes

on a global scale and trigger food crises. Nuclear weapons are not necessary for humankind and we absolutely must eliminate them from our world.

The Mayors for Peace organization is composed of more than 5,500 members from cities and regions around the world. With a goal of abolishing nuclear weapons by 2020, we are currently conducting a signature-collecting campaign calling for a start to negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention. This is related to the proposal in 2008 from Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Looking at other regions, we can see that in the Middle East, efforts have begun towards the establishment of Nuclear Weapon-Free Zones. In the Northeast Asia, where we live, tensions are mounting over North Korea's nuclear weapons and it is therefore essential that efforts be taken to establish a nuclear weapon-free zone.

For nuclear disarmament, efforts must be carried out on both global and regional fronts.

To those of you gathered here today as representatives of governments of various nations and also from NGOs, I say that now is the time for us to join forces in abolishing nuclear weapons. Now is the time for us to contribute to the future of humankind and our world, by pulling together. Let's work together to create a situation in which the five nuclear powers who were absent from the Oslo conference this year, must participate in the next conference to be held in Mexico.

At this Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, I sincerely hope that voices from the international community and civil society calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons will be heard, and further progress will be made towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you for your kind attention.