

## **Statement by Mayor Kazumi Matsui on Behalf of Mayors for Peace**

*United Nations Conference to Negotiate a Legally Binding Instrument to Prohibit Nuclear Weapons,  
Leading Towards their Total Elimination*

United Nations, 15 June 2017

Thank you madam President for giving me the opportunity to address this United Nations Conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons. I am speaking today as Mayor of Hiroshima—the first city attacked by a nuclear weapon—to share the earnest wishes of the *hibakusha* for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Seventy-two years ago, on August 6, 1945, the single atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima reduced the city to ruin. Even those who barely managed to survive have been tormented by lifelong suffering. They have gone through the sorrow of losing their beloved families and friends, the long-term effects of the radiation, and constant anxiety about their health and their offspring's. Having gone through such indescribable misery, they have arrived at the unshakable conviction that “no one shall ever again suffer as we have”, and continue to appeal for nuclear abolition and their fervent desire for peace to the people of the world. Their earnest wish is to witness the prohibition of nuclear weapons in their lifetime.

We sincerely welcome and thank Ambassador Whyte Gomez, President of the conference, for the inclusion of a reference to the sufferings, as well as the contributions, of the *hibakusha* in her excellent draft Convention text released recently. We also welcome that the draft contains provisions to allow future participation of those states currently dependent on nuclear weapons. This is in line with the proposals of Mayors for Peace, which I preside over. It is our strong hope that, through open and constructive discussions in this session on the basis of the President's draft, the resulting new Treaty will become a clear-cut prohibition treaty that will also reinforce and strengthen existing legal instruments. I therefore strongly hope that such a new treaty will be adopted in this session.

Our challenge after the successful adoption of a new treaty will be clear: We need to persuade nuclear-armed states to give up their bad habit of investing in wasteful nuclear weapons modernization programs and to encourage them and their allies who have boycotted the negotiations to join the treaty. For this purpose, contracting parties to the new treaty and a wide range of civil society partners will need to join forces to conduct earnest dialogues with the nuclear-armed states and their allies to remind them that reliance on nuclear weapons is not only useless for solving current challenges of international security, but will also endanger the survival of the entire human species. Furthermore, the entire world community needs to cooperate and work together to ensure that the new treaty will become a fully effective legal instrument to achieve nuclear abolition. We believe that such efforts will also help accelerate good-faith nuclear disarmament efforts by the nuclear-armed states.

It is time for the policymakers of the world, especially those in the nuclear-armed states, to exercise decisive leadership in implementing their nuclear disarmament obligation if they are serious about preventing nuclear proliferation. They should recall that past progress in nuclear disarmament took place during peaks of international tension through courageous joint initiatives of political leaders who reached out, as shown in the case of the conclusion of the Limited Test Ban Treaty in 1963 and the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty in 1987. It is their turn to do it again now.

Mayors for Peace, with nearly 7,400 member cities in 162 countries and regions, will continue to cultivate broad global opinion towards nuclear disarmament. We will continue to work together with our diverse partners in the world to nurture a collaborative international environment that encourages world leaders to take decisive and insightful leaderships towards nuclear abolition. We do so in our conviction that when the entire world community can cooperate to strengthen peaceful disputes settlement mechanisms in line with the spirit of UN Charter, the world community moves closer to a peaceful world without nuclear weapons. Let us begin this work today.