

2017 Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review
Conference NGO Session
May 3, 2017 (Vienna)

Speech by Representative of Mayors for Peace

(Tomihisa Taue, Mayor of Nagasaki)

Chairman,

Distinguished delegates and leaders of civil groups,

My name is Tomihisa Taue, the Mayor of Nagasaki. It is an honor to address you today as the representative of Nagasaki, a city which was devastated by an atomic bomb, and as the Vice-President of Mayors for Peace, which 162 countries and regions, and over 7,200 cities are members of.

On August 9th, 1945, the second atomic bomb in the world was dropped on my city of Nagasaki. The terrible heat rays, blast, and radiation released by the atomic bomb instantly destroyed buildings and turned the city into a burnt field. Of course the people living there were unsafe as well. Over 70,000 lives, including those of children, women, and the elderly, were irrationally lost. Even today, 72 years later, those who narrowly survived are still suffering from cancer and other aftereffects of radiation exposure.

However, there are still over 15,000 nuclear weapons on the earth today. And a lot of money is systematically being spent on making more solid and high-performance nuclear weapons. Further, the Trump administration of the United States continues to make remarks about making stronger nuclear forces, which goes against the efforts of international society. Moreover, threats from North Korea are increasing day by day in

Northeast Asia where I live.

Fears of the increasing danger of the use of nuclear weapons and the threat that the principles of the NPT, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament may be overthrown are wide spread. Nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament are promises that the member states of the NPT Treaty made with the world. We should confirm once more that following the principles of the NPT is an obligation. In particular, I request that the United States and Russia begin bold negotiation with specific targets, such as reducing the number of nuclear warheads to 500. This would be an opportunity for all nuclear weapon states to sit at a table and talk together on further nuclear disarmament.

This year, at the United Nations head office, negotiations towards a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons officially began. During the long period of time until these discussions began, *hibakusha*, or atomic bomb survivors have continued to appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

The experiences which the hibakusha share with us have an ability to appeal directly to our conscience. That is not only because it is a message from them as a victim of the atomic bomb, but because it is a “warning” from them as a member of mankind.

Hibakusha can be said to be a “signpost” which shows the direction we should go towards for a world free of nuclear weapons. However, the average age of hibakusha is over 80 and they do not have much time left. A world without hibakusha, or rather, a world which has lost the signpost leading to a world free of nuclear weapons continues to approach closer.

Now, while a signpost still exists in the world, we must have the courage to take a step towards the realization of an effective legal ban on nuclear weapons.

I appeal to nuclear weapon states and to the countries under the nuclear umbrella including Japan. Please lend an ear to the large voice of civil society which wishes for conclusion of a nuclear prohibition treaty. Please listen to the words of the hibakusha. Can you say that nuclear weapons are necessary for the security of the country if your family experienced what the hibakusha did?

Before thinking with your head, please come to Nagasaki or Hiroshima and see with your eyes, hear with your ears, and feel with your heart, the reality of the atomic bombing. By doing so, you should be able to understand how inhumane nuclear weapons are and how they need to be gone as soon as possible.

Do not assume that conclusion of a nuclear prohibition treaty is impossible. Have the courage to participate in the negotiation and plan a specific proposal that you can be a part of. At the same time, please pursue a security policy that does not rely on nuclear deterrence.

I appeal to the countries that lead the negotiation of a legal ban. I deeply appreciate the strong will and efforts for trying to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, there were no nuclear states present at the meeting in March. It is essential to engage the countries, including the nuclear weapon states, in negotiation of a legal instrument in order to abolish nuclear weapons. Please continue to take leadership in this initiative.

“Nagasaki must be the last place to experience an atomic bomb” . This is the hope of mankind. Nagasaki and Hiroshima strongly believe it is also the will of mankind. We, the citizens of Nagasaki and Hiroshima will continue to seek for the creation of “intellect” to continue discussion among all states, rather than conflict, in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you very much.