

**Message from Mayor Kazumi Matsui of Hiroshima
on the occasion of the Planting Ceremony for a Second-Generation A-bombed
Ginkgo tree**

I am deeply honored today to extend this message on the occasion of the planting ceremony for a second-generation A-bombed ginkgo tree at the UN Office at Geneva. As President of Mayors for Peace, I am pleased that Mayor Jan Durnez of the City of Ypres, Belgium, has agreed to convey this message of congratulations on behalf of myself and the 7,146 member cities of our organization.

It is my great pleasure to celebrate that the tree is planted today in Ariana Park of Palais des Nations in Geneva by UN Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki-moon in the presence of everyone involved in this event as part of the collaboration between the United Nations and Mayors for Peace.

The mother tree of this *ginkgo* was in Hiroshima on August 6, 1945, when the city was devastated by a single atomic bomb. The tree was badly burned due to the bombing, but it went on to sprout buds again, giving the citizens courage and new hope for living.

Seventy-one years later, over 15,000 nuclear weapons still remain, collectively enough to destroy the Earth itself. Given this reality, in order to create a future free from nuclear weapons, it is necessary for each and all of us to demonstrate our shared desire and passion for peace in unified action.

In May when this tree was donated to the UN Office at Geneva, it was only 30 centimeters tall, but is now 1.5 meters. With continued proper care and good conditions, it could grow to be a dozen meters tall. I believe the same goes for nuclear disarmament. If we succeed in working in unison with people around the world based on a shared awareness of our common family to achieve a world where we can live together with respect for diverse values, we could generate enough power to make nuclear abolition possible.

It is my hope that this tree will come to serve as a symbol of peace and that as it grows, so does the momentum in the international community for nuclear abolition. I hope from the bottom of my heart that our prayers for peace will be shared widely and for a long time. Thank you.