

Statement of the Mayor of Nagasaki
at the Preparatory Committee for NPT Review Conference
May 5, 2009

Mr. Chairman and the delegates of all the countries represented here today; my name is Tomihisa Taue and I am the mayor of Nagasaki City. As Vice-President of Mayors for Peace, I am grateful to have this opportunity to convey the voices of the citizens of the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki and those who stand in solidarity with them everywhere.

The hopes of these citizens have been raised by the words of United States President Barack Obama, who proclaimed in Prague this April that “the United States will take concrete steps toward a world without nuclear weapons.”

Our hopes were also raised in the year 2000, when the nuclear powers promised to completely abolish nuclear weapons at the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference. In reality, this promise was ignored and a period of severe cold followed.

Even during this period, however, the people in the atomic-bombed cities continued with their efforts. Some 64 years after the atomic bombing, the people of Nagasaki are still speaking out about the horrific destruction caused by the bomb and maintaining their hope that nuclear weapons will be abolished.

Constantly at the center of these efforts are the atomic bomb survivors. These courageous people have continued to speak out about the terrible suffering they went through, even while overcoming horrific injuries and the loss of loved ones. They believe the international community has failed to seriously undertake nuclear disarmament because even now it does not comprehend the true horror of nuclear weapons. Having survived the devastation of the atomic bomb, they believe it is their mission and responsibility to recount to others their terrible memories. Underlying their efforts is a desire to ensure that no one else in the world experiences the same fate.

Now, carrying on the mission of the aging atomic survivors, young people in Nagasaki are making efforts of their own, such as creating petitions calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Three days after the attack on Hiroshima, at 11:02 a.m. on August 9, 1945, more than 150,000 Nagasaki citizens were killed or injured by the atomic bombing, and survivors suffer from aftereffects to this day. The people of Nagasaki consider this horrific experience a warning to humankind, and earnestly work to send their message to the world. The Mayors for Peace Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol to eliminate nuclear weapons by 2020, the 75th anniversary of the nuclear attack on Nagasaki, echoes the pleas of the people from the atomic-bombed cities.

In last year's Nagasaki Peace Declaration, I declared that the U.S. and Russia must take the lead in efforts to abolish nuclear weapons. These two countries, said to possess 95% of the world's nuclear warheads, should begin implementing broad reductions of their arsenals. We were particularly moved by President Obama's recognition of his country's responsibility when he stated that "as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act."

To President Obama and the leaders of all nuclear powers, we say, "Please come to Nagasaki. Visit the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum and see the aftermath of the bombing. Listen to the voices of the survivors and you will understand why we so strongly seek a world without nuclear weapons. We embrace President Obama's proposal for a Global Summit on Nuclear Security and Nagasaki offers to host a session, so that world leaders can dedicate themselves to ensuring that it is forever the last site of an atomic bombing. You will be welcomed with open arms.

This August the Mayors for Peace General Conference will be held in Nagasaki City, and next February representatives from NGOs will gather here for the 4th Global Citizen's Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Ladies and gentlemen, I look forward to meeting again in Nagasaki, in preparation for our gathering next year in New York. Let us make the trend toward a nuclear weapon-free world a steady, powerful trend of the times

I hold high hopes that the discussions of the Preparatory Committee this year will be thorough, and that next year's NPT Review Conference will produce substantial results.

Thank you for your kind attention.