

Remarks by Mr. Kazumi Matsui

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2015 Review Conference of the States Parties to the
Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), NGO Session

United Nations Headquarters, New York

1 May 2015, 15:00-

It is an honor for me to address delegates and non-governmental groups attending this 2015 NPT Review Conference.

To begin, I would like to express my deep sorrow for the tens of thousands of victims of Nepal where a destructive massive earthquake hit, and convey my deep condolences to the bereaved families. Last August we experienced a tragic disaster involving mud slides caused by record heavy rains and lost a lot of citizens in Hiroshima. As Mayor of Hiroshima, I would like to share my deepest sympathy with the citizens of Nepal and I wish fervently for the recovery of the devastated site as early as possible.

On this year, which marks the 70th anniversary of the first atomic bombing in the history of humanity, many citizens including the atomic bomb survivors (*hibakusha*) from Hiroshima and Nagasaki have gathered here in New York City with a strong wish for the presentation of a concrete roadmap for nuclear weapons abolition at this conference. Today, representing the atomic bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and as the president of Mayors for Peace, an organization consisting of over 6,600 like-minded member cities from 160 countries and regions around the world, I would like to say a few words.

At 8:15 a.m. on August 6, 1945, the single atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima reduced the city to ruin through the massive radiation and fierce heat rays and blast that it released, killing indiscriminately non-combatants like women, children, and the elderly, who accounted for the vast majority of the 350,000 people who were in Hiroshima at the time. The number of those who perished as a result of the atomic bombing reached approximately 140,000 by the end of 1945.

Furthermore, those who just barely managed to survive have been tormented by lifelong suffering, such as the sorrow of losing their families and friends, the long-term effects of the radiation, and concerns about their health. Even now, 70 years after the atomic bombing, the survivors continue to suffer from deep wounds on their bodies and souls.

Seeing the reality of the atomic bombing, it is clear that nuclear weapons are **the** ultimate inhumane weapons, and are an absolute evil.

For some seven decades now, the *hibakusha* have been recounting their experiences. Having experienced indescribable suffering, they have arrived at their unshakable conviction that “no one shall ever again suffer as we have”, and continue to spread the inhumane impacts of the atomic bombing to the world, ringing the alarm bell. Appealing that the only way to guarantee that nuclear weapons are never used again is the total elimination of nuclear weapons, they have been putting in their best efforts towards the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. Mayors for Peace gives full support to this earnest appeal of the *hibakusha*.

In this context, I note with acclaim that both the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences adopted consensus language referring to nuclear disarmament as offering the only “absolute guarantee” against any future use—or threat of use—of such weapons. I also welcome the fact that the 2010 Review Conference voiced its deep concern at the continued risks posed for humanity by the possible use of these weapons and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that would result, and referred to a nuclear weapons convention.

I am similarly encouraged by the impressive attendance at the three major international conferences that have been held in recent years in Norway, Mexico, and Austria on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. These conferences included opportunities to hear testimonies from the *hibakusha*, which encouraged the resolution for nuclear weapons abolition among the participants even further. Through these conferences, the participants deepened their awareness about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons, as well as on the risks that nuclear weapons may actually be used as a result of misunderstanding or accident. Additionally, the recognition that nuclear weapons have absolutely no role to play in maintaining international peace, is widely being shared. Currently, many of the governments attending these conferences are working closely with civil society to advance this humanitarian approach.

Some people, however, insist that nuclear weapons abolition requires a security environment that will make this possible. Mayors for Peace, an organization of which I serve as president, not only appeals for nuclear weapons abolition, but is urging the governments of various nations to shift from the security system relying on “nuclear deterrence” based on mutual distrust and threat, to a more humane and sustainable security system. And, in support of such a shift, we work hard with wide-ranging civil society partners to cultivate a shared sense of world community rooted in an awareness that we all belong to the same human family. This way of

thinking is in line with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, such as the elimination of all sorts of weapons of mass destruction, a reduction in military expenditures, the prohibition of threat or use of force. The member cities of Mayors for Peace, supporting this cause, have increased by approximately 2,000 cities in even just the past four years of my term as mayor, and this number continues to increase at an accelerating rate. Currently, the population of all these cities makes up one-seventh of the total population of the world, and like-minded citizens around the world are increasing even further.

Others claim that mutual distrust among nations and the existence of terrorists are impeding nuclear disarmament. However, we of Mayors for Peace cannot agree with this assertion. When so many sensible people from all across the civil society are struggling hard to promote mutual understanding among international society, in the aim for a peaceful world without nuclear weapons, what is the significance of political leadership? It is now the time for the policymakers of the world, especially those of nuclear weapon states, to demonstrate decisive leadership and work together towards nuclear weapons abolition and the creation of an international environment that will make it possible. The *hibakusha*, Mayors for Peace, and various like-minded groups in the civil society around the world will give full support to such political leadership, and are willing to work together to achieve it.

Consolidated efforts by state and city governments, parliamentarians, women, youth, scholars, lawyers, doctors, artists, environmentalists, human rights activists, and countless other constituencies can change the world.

I would therefore like to appeal to everyone participating in the current NPT Review Conference to work together to achieve a successful outcome. In this regard, I am convinced that the realization of a nuclear-weapon-free world will require a nuclear weapons convention or some other legal framework with the same goal. Article VI of the NPT requires not only nuclear weapons states but also all its parties to pursue negotiations in good faith on nuclear disarmament. However, a wide legal gap still remains towards the total prohibition of nuclear weapons even after the 45-year history of the NPT. Now is the time at this conference that the NPT Parties agree to begin negotiations to close this legal gap and, in particular, to start negotiation on a nuclear weapons convention at the earliest possible time.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the representatives of all the states parties to the NPT to unite and make a significant step forward toward nuclear weapons abolition at this 2015 Review Conference, and let us never give up in the pursuit of this great

cause until it is finally achieved. On our part, we, Mayors for Peace, together with wide-ranging civil society partners will do everything that we can.