

HIROSHIMA-NAGASAKI APPEAL

We, the representatives of 105 cities and two organizations from 28 countries, met at the 5th World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and discussed in great detail the keynote theme: In Order for Humankind to Live through the 21st Century - Toward Reconciliation between Humankind and Science and Technology. The secretariat made thorough preparations in order to make this conference more rewarding, and as a result, we found that our discussions were more lively than those at previous conferences.

The 20th century was a time of brilliant scientific and technological advances. Yet, during those same 100 years, humankind created such tangible threats to its own survival as nuclear weaponry and destruction of the environment. At this Conference, we reflected on these mistakes of the 20th century, and confirmed our resolve to make the 21st century the 'century of humanity.'

By 'century of humanity' we mean a century in which all life is valued and respected - a century in which peace is realized not through violence but through reconciliation, cooperation, reason and conscience. Above all, this new 'century' should mean that the children who will shoulder the responsibility for the future are ensured hope and vibrant, enjoyable lives.

We see, however, that many forms of violence persist on the earth. Great quantities of nuclear weapons remain on our planet, and the territories they target extend even into space. The earth is being destroyed by such processes as global warming and contamination from radioactive materials and waste. Throughout the world we see continual local conflict, growing numbers of refugees and violations of human rights, as well as widening economic gaps, and hunger, poverty, and infectious diseases inflicting hardship and suffering in developing countries.

Millions of children today are obliged to live in extremely harsh conditions. Children are sent into battle as soldiers. Far too many suffer physical, mental and spiritual abuse at home, in school, and in their communities, as well as abuse on the basis of their racial background. Drug use by children is also a serious problem. Children are threatened by exposure to violence through TV, movies, and electronic media, and are far more prone to commit violent acts, often posing a menace to society.

Though national leaders throughout the world are well aware of these challenges, their attention is focused on pursuing national and economic interests rather than implementing effective measures to deal with these challenges. It is ordinary people, and the cities in which they dwell, that suffer most from wars and violence. We, as representatives of cities, have confirmed once again that it is the responsibility of cities to protect the human rights of our citizens and ensure their security.

To create a 'century of humanity', in which priority is given to the security of each individual person as well as to human interests, we, the participants in this World Conference of Mayors, jointly appeal to all governments, the United Nations, and other international organizations, to take the following actions:

1. Respect the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice regarding the illegality of the use of nuclear weapons and strive to conclude as quickly as possible an international treaty banning nuclear weapons; halt immediately any program that might trigger a new arms race in space; and promote total abolition of all inhumane weapons with the potential to inflict lasting damage to people and to the environment.
2. Further international commitment to regulating small and light arms which spur local and ethnic conflicts and take many lives.
3. Work toward implementing the actions of the entire international community to address environmental problems, including the immediate ratification of the Kyoto Protocol.
4. Drastically reduce military budgets and use the enormous funds that will become available to actively promote the conversion of industrial structures from military to civilian uses.
5. Establish, before the end of the decade, an international framework to protect children from wars and other forms of violence in accordance with the U.N. Declaration of 2001-2010 as the 'International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World.'
6. Work to resolve social injustice and close the widening gap between wealth and poverty by promoting a culture of peace.

We, in accordance with the Comprehensive Action Plan ratified at this 5th General Conference, will work even harder to realize the 'century of humanity' by actively taking appropriate measures to promote the Plan, giving particular emphasis to the following:

1. Work hand-in-hand with international NGOs, NPOs, and other entities to abolish nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, to radically reduce levels of conventional weapons, and to seek reconciliation and encourage confidence-building among peoples in conflict.
2. Strengthen multifaceted cooperation for the resolution of global problems by linking cities through the Internet and other means of communication.
3. Promote peace education at all levels to give the children who will lead the 21st century a love of the earth and respect for all its myriad forms of life; systematize the meaning of the first-hand experiences of the atomic bombing in a scholarly way.

We further declare our strong support for the 2001 Peace Declarations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and vow to work in close cooperation with the public to achieve these objectives.

We hereby resolve the above.

August 9, 2001

5th World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity