

### **Speech by the mayor of Hiroshima and president of Mayors for Peace**

Good morning His Excellency Cornel Feruta, Chair of the Second Session, distinguished representatives of State Parties, and members of NGOs gathered here today. My name is Matsui Kazumi. As mayor of the atomic-bombed city Hiroshima and president of Mayors for Peace, I would like to speak to you today.

On August 6, 1945, Hiroshima was reduced to ruins by the blast from a single atomic bomb. 140,000 people lost their precious lives. The suffering of the *hibakusha*, or survivors of the bombing, from the aftereffects from the radiation, still continues to this day.

The inhumanity of nuclear weapons is the main focus of my speech. I shall now read aloud an extract from the Peace Declaration I delivered on August 6 of last year. I would like to ask you all to please close your eyes and listen, and imagine the scenes of that day.

8:15 a.m., August 6, 1945. Our hometown was reduced to ashes by a single atomic bomb. The houses we came home to, our everyday lives, the customs we cherished – all were gone: “Hiroshima was no more. The city had vanished. No roads, just a burnt plain of rubble as far as I could see, and sadly, I could see too far. I followed electric lines that had fallen along what I took to be tram rails. The tram street was hot. Death was all around.” That was our city, as seen by a young woman of twenty. That was Hiroshima for all the survivors. The exciting festivals, the playing in boats, the fishing and clamming, the children catching long-armed shrimp – a way of life had disappeared from our beloved rivers.

The City of Hiroshima has received over 130,000 memoirs, laying bare all the disastrous facts of their horrifying experiences. A look at the reality of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki should make it clear that nuclear weapons are the epitome of weapons against humanity – an absolute evil. In this context, nuclear accidents such as Chernobyl and Fukushima were wake-up calls. Deliberate release of the destructive power of nuclear energy against humanity cannot be allowed. The very existence of this kind of weaponry should not be legal.

The *hibakusha*, having met a fate of cruelty that cannot be put into words, have overcome hatred, suffering, and despair, and have come to the unshakable conviction that no one else should ever suffer such a grave tragedy. They have since never ceased working to transmit to the people of the world their earnest desire, as human beings, and sincere prayer for all the people in the world to live in peace. Everyone in the international community must listen to the voices of these *hibakusha* and share the earnest hopes of these *hibakusha* for peace and humanity so that they may deepen their resolve to strive for a nuclear-weapons-free world.

Presently, the international security system is based on the assumption that differences in nationality, race, and religion are prone to create distrust and animosity among people, which in turn breed conflicts among nations. This system attempts to preserve peace

through the threat of indiscriminate mass killings. As such, the system has a fundamental vulnerability and is destined to be unstable over time. Can we really remain dependent on a system like this for long? What we need now is to break the barrier of mutual mistrust and to nurture human bonds and a sense of community on a global scale so that we can construct a more stable security system that is rooted in a deeply shared human consciousness. Let us now all work together towards creating such a reliable security system in order to get away from so-called “nuclear deterrence”?

The *hibakusha* are deeply troubled by the recent developments in North Korea’s nuclear program and its ballistic missile launches. North Korea should not depend on threatening others to feel secure. That is just a path towards deepening isolation. I share the sincere wishes of *hibakusha* that, in no time, North Korea can turn its efforts towards the goal of prospering together in peace and friendship with the rest of the world.

Excellencies, representatives of State Parties,  
Let us join hands, as members of the same human family, and bring to life a new movement towards a nuclear-weapons-free world! I appreciate highly that after last year’s preparatory committee, the inhumanity of nuclear weapons has been rightfully highlighted, and the move to outlaw nuclear weapons has been accelerating. Also, the ministerial meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) will be held in Hiroshima next spring. I expect that this meeting will squarely tackle the reality of the atomic bombing, and agree on concrete measures towards nuclear disarmament. It will be all the more significant that concrete disarmament measures will be announced right at the site of the atomic bombing. Likewise, great expectations are placed on the early commencement of negotiations to conclude the Nuclear Weapons Convention, whose purpose is to realize a nuclear-weapons-free world by way of making nuclear weapons illegal. I trust and expect everyone here to take leadership in this important initiative.

Mayors for Peace now enjoys a membership of 5,587 cities from 156 countries and regions around the world. The population of those cities makes up one-seventh of the total population of the world, or 1 billion people. For the successful negotiations for a Nuclear Weapons Convention, extensive efforts and cooperation are required not only of countries, and international organizations, but also us – civil society. Mayors for Peace will collaborate with a great number of citizens, NGOs, and other groups from around the world to push forward the negotiations to realize the Nuclear Weapons Convention.

The average age of the *hibakusha*, whose heartfelt desire is to witness the elimination of nuclear weapons within their lifetimes, is now over 78 years. Let me conclude my speech by expressing our earnest hope that our concerted efforts will successfully eradicate this absolute evil and that we can witness the abolition of nuclear weapons with our own eyes.

Thank you for your attention.