

Statement by MATSUI Kazumi
President of Mayors for Peace and Mayor of Hiroshima
First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
Vienna, Austria
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Thank you, Ambassador Kmentt. I welcome this opportunity to speak on behalf of Mayors for Peace and to commend the efforts made by all those involved in organizing this first Meeting of States Parties. Our network of member cities, which will commemorate its 40th anniversary on June 24, has sought to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, the same noble future vision embodied in the Treaty before us today.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine has evolved into attacking civilians indiscriminately and even repeatedly implying the use of nuclear weapons. It is our urgent priority to find a solution. However, that solution must not be one that ruins all that humanity has built to make the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of war and nuclear attacks a thing of the past. We must reawaken the world now.

The *hibakusha* have conveyed their fervent plea that “no one else should suffer as we have.” That “no one else” includes all those who are suffering from this tragic war. While challenging, the only way to faithfully answer their appeal is to advance nuclear disarmament, leading to their total elimination. This is a fact that has never changed. Now, let all of us—the UN, national governments, and civil society—collaborate urgently for the effective implementation of this Treaty, directed toward its noble future vision. In doing so, it is imperative to have the nuclear-armed states deepen their understanding of the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and the uncertainty of nuclear arsenal management by winning additional states parties to this Treaty, especially non-nuclear weapon states.

To that end, Mayors for Peace implements initiatives under the “*PX Vision (Vision for Peaceful Transformation to a Sustainable World)*” that include encouraging political leaders and citizens to visit the atomic bombed cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Both cities strive to welcome as many people as possible in our cities, and next year, the G7 Leaders' Summit will be held in Hiroshima. It is our sincere hope that on this occasion, all G7 leaders, including the leaders of the nuclear-armed States, will profoundly accept the spirit of Hiroshima, which seeks a peaceful, nuclear-weapon-free world.

Now, more than ever, we must have all people—the people of your states, of the nuclear-armed states, of their allies, even national leaders—stand with us in the pursuit of nuclear weapons abolition and lasting world peace. I invite all in attendance to join us in our endeavor. Fulfilling the ambitious goals of this Treaty, including the improvement and enrichment of victim assistance provision, is in line with the urgent plea of the *hibakusha* of Hiroshima. I would like to extend my very best wishes for the success of this meeting in anticipation of answering the *hibakusha*'s calls.