

## Mayors for Peace

(Statement by SUZUKI Shiro, Vice President of Mayors for Peace and Mayor of Nagasaki)

Chairman, distinguished delegates, and leaders of civil groups, I am SUZUKI Shiro, Mayor of Nagasaki. I would like to express my respect to everyone who has worked tirelessly to organize this First Session of the Preparatory Committee and would also like to express my gratitude for being allowed the opportunity to address you all.

As Russia's invasion of Ukraine shows no signs of ending, nuclear weapons have been repeatedly used as an intimidation tool, and reliance on nuclear deterrence is intensifying in response to this perceived threat. As these actions continue, the atomic bombed cities are growing ever concerned that less and less people will view nuclear weapons as a taboo. One reason for this, is that there are still many around the world who are not aware of the reality of the atomic bombing: what actually happens when atomic bombs are used on people.

During the G7 Hiroshima Summit held last May, state leaders demonstrated the importance of learning the reality of the atomic bombing by visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and listening to the testimony of an atomic bomb survivor.

Learning the reality of the atomic bombing is the starting point on the path towards a world without nuclear weapons and serves as a driving force in bringing about change in the world. Nuclear weapons are not only a threat confined to Hiroshima and Nagasaki's pasts; they are a present and future issue with which everyone living on Earth must contend.

I hereby call on the representatives of each state:

Visit the atomic bombed cities. Look with your eyes, listen with your ears, and feel for yourself what happened to the people beneath the mushroom cloud. Then ask yourself if you would want your children and their children to live in a world with nuclear weapons or one without.

At present, there are approximately 12,000 nuclear weapons on this planet, with 90 percent of them in the possession of the United States and Russia. I call on these nuclear superpowers to assume responsibility, make earnest efforts toward nuclear disarmament, and create a new current among international society toward nuclear disarmament. The INF Treaty, which was instrumental in ending the Cold War, was negotiated upon and signed in the midst of high tensions. Therefore, I request that you recall this significant piece of history in spite of the difficult challenges we face and begin negotiations regarding a successor to the New START Treaty that is due to expire in February 2026.

I hope that during this Preparatory Committee, the states parties will engage in constructive dialogue focused on the concept of “human security,” and that this meeting will serve as an opportunity to reinforce and strengthen a severely weakening NPT regime, a cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

I would like to close by sharing the following message and expressing my resolution to do everything in my power to realize the abolition of nuclear weapons.

“Make Nagasaki the last wartime atomic bombing site.”

Thank you.