

Statement by MATSUI Kazumi
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NGO presentations

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Good afternoon, everyone. My name is MATSUI Kazumi, the Mayor of the City of Hiroshima, and President of Mayors for Peace. 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 Preparatory Committee.

On August 6, 1945, the first atomic bomb ever used against human beings was dropped on Hiroshima. It caused devastating casualties instantly and extensively, reducing the city to ashes. Nearly 80 years have passed since then, during which civil society has continued striving to raise awareness that nuclear weapons are an absolute evil and the ultimate inhumanity. Despite this, more than 12,000 nuclear warheads still exist on the planet, and there is a growing trend among nuclear-weapon states, and even some non-nuclear-weapon states to advocate for the possession of nuclear weapons or participation in nuclear sharing as an effective means of national defense. We find it profoundly concerning that such beliefs increase the likelihood of nuclear weapons being used and betray the principles of the NPT. We are also deeply troubled that this mindset could undermine the very ideals of the United Nations, which was established as a peacebuilding system in the aftermath of World War II.

Last year, Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. By overcoming their own painful experiences and hatred, the *hibakusha* have transformed their plea that “no one should suffer as we have,” into a noble cause advocating for peace for all humanity. This award clearly recognizes their achievements in appealing, with strong determination, to the world about the realities of the atomic bombings and the inhumanity of nuclear weapons. It also reflects a sense of alarm regarding the current international situation.

Mayors for Peace, established in 1982 as an organization to convey this ardent wish, transcends borders and unites cities around the world in the effort to pave the way for the abolition of nuclear weapons. It has now grown into a global network of peace cities with approximately 8,500 member cities worldwide.

To dispel the suspicion and doubt that fuel conflicts, each and every citizen should now share the experiences and values of others through exchange activities in daily life, such as music, art, sports, and more, to foster a circle of trust and spread the sense of safety. Mayors for Peace will make every effort to raise awareness of peace in civil society and create a world filled with the culture of peace. Honored global representatives, heed civil society’s call for peace, and refrain from relying on nuclear deterrence. It is my sincerest hope that you will urge world leaders to adopt diplomatic policies for a peaceful solution through dialogue and advance reliable nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures in good faith. Thank you.