

2019 World Conference against A and H Bombs - Hiroshima

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(Delivered by Masauji Akio, Chief of the Civic Affairs Bureau)

On this occasion of holding the 2019 World Conference against A and H Bombs - Hiroshima, I would like to extend my greetings. Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Hiroshima. On behalf of 1.19 million Hiroshima citizens, I'd like to express our heartfelt welcome to you. I also would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for taking positive actions on a daily basis for the elimination of nuclear weapons and to bring about an eternal global peace.

On August 6th 74 years ago, Hiroshima experienced the calamity of the atomic bombing for the first time in human history. Hibakusha, enduring great scars on their bodies and hearts, have continued to tell their experiences, and proclaimed their wishes for peace saying, "Never again should anyone be allowed to suffer such an experience".

I believe the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was adopted at the United Nations in July 2017, was made possible because such appeals from the Hibakusha, based on their deep humanitarian belief, have moved the world.

Turning to the situation of nuclear weapons, however, some 14,000 nuclear warheads still exist in the world. In addition, with the rise of self-centered nationalism, the nuclear powers not only neglect to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament in good faith, as mandated by Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, but rather they proceed with modernization of their nuclear arsenals. Moreover, there are concerns that, due to the expiry of the INF Treaty between the US and Russia, there is an increased risk of nuclear weapons being used. There are also other uncertainties, including the denuclearization of North Korea and the future of the nuclear deal with Iran.

Given the current situation, it is ever more important for global civil society to have larger numbers of people who can sympathize with the wishes of the Hibakusha, and to establish a common perspective that a "world without nuclear weapons" is the first step toward an eternal world peace.

For this goal, the City of Hiroshima is working to disseminate Hibakusha's experiences and wishes for peace widely to the world, as well as to the next generation. Along with the nearly 7,800 member cities of the Mayors for Peace in 163 nations and regions, we are delivering with all our strength the wishes of civil society to the leaders of the world and creating an environment supportive of leaders taking courageous action for nuclear abolition.

In order to achieve a “peaceful world without nuclear weapons”, it is important that all members of civil society wish for it and take action together hand in hand. In that sense, it is truly significant that the World Conference, working along with Hibakusha’s aspirations, is being held today, and I sincerely hope that the Conference will provide people with significant opportunities to renew their commitment for peace.

In closing, I wish the conference great success, and everyone the best of health and good luck with your activities.