

The 2020 World Conference against A and H Bombs Organizers' Statement

It is now 75 years since atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. From the 2020 World Conference against A and H Bombs held in the midst of the raging COVID-19 pandemic, we extend our heartfelt greetings of solidarity to all friends who act in pursuit of a world without nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons are still threatening humanity. The Hibakusha and nuclear test victims have long warned from their own experiences about the inhumane consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. In Hiroshima and Nagasaki the lives of more than 200,000 citizens were lost by the end of 1945; those who narrowly escaped the moment later suffered from delayed effects from the atomic bombings, social discrimination and poverty; subsequent generations are still haunted by anxieties about their health.

Nuclear weapons are the “weapons of evil”. There should never be another Hiroshima or Nagasaki anywhere on earth or for any reason whatsoever. We call on all people around the world to take action together to eliminate such a danger without further delay.

Nearly 700,000 people have already died across the world from the pandemic, and the serious damage has been done especially among the destitute, immigrants, refugees, indigenous communities and other socially vulnerable strata of people. Having incurred destruction of natural environment, poverty and disparity, calamitous reduction in medical services and social welfare, the neo-liberalist policies must be held severely accountable. While the global poverty rate increases, some two trillion dollars (i.e. more than 200 trillion yen) are spent for global military build-up, including the development of nuclear weapons. ^(*1) Resources should be redirected away from military build-up to people’s livelihood and employment, everyday businesses and public health.

A recent UN statement on the current problems says: “In the 75-year history of the United Nations, the folly of seeking security in vast destructive arsenals has never been clearer.”^(*2) We call for a change in policy from the military-based “national security” to one that will give top priority to people’s lives, safety and dignity.

Nuclear weapons pose existential threat to the very survival of humanity. Scientists warn that even small portion of nuclear arsenals, if used, would cause climate change, leading to global famine, in addition to the immediate deaths of millions of people from the detonations. Their catastrophic consequence would be far beyond the level of the devastation in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Their ramifications would extend beyond national borders, threaten lives and health of both current and future generations and cause fatal economic and social damage. It would have a serious disproportionate impact on women.

There are still nearly 14,000 nuclear warheads, of which some 2,000 missiles are kept ready to launch on warning. In addition to their possible intentional use, nuclear detonation may happen even by accident or miscalculation. Fortunately, the worst case has been so far avoided, but this danger will continue as long as nuclear weapons exist. We must not leave the security of the human race to mere “luck”.

To overcome the global crises, including from nuclear weapons, pandemic, climate change or poverty, international cooperation is essential. Nevertheless the superpowers are confronted with one another, wielding their own national interest-first policies. The US and Russia are escalating their nuclear weapon employment

postures and are continuing development and deployment of new nuclear weapons. The other nuclear powers, too, continue to cling to their “nuclear deterrents” and are modernizing their arsenals. Their adherence to nuclear weapons in the name of “nuclear deterrence” is the cause of further proliferation and hostility, exposing the human race to yet another crisis.

The urgency of the elimination of nuclear weapons being more obvious than ever, the global current for it is steadily making headway. In cooperation with civil society, 122 countries adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in July, 2017. This treaty, which expressly renders nuclear weapons illegal for the first time, marks an important step towards abolishing nuclear weapons. The countries that led the adoption of the TPNW and the civil society movement are since then bringing pro-nuclear forces to bay. The number of countries that ratified the TPNW has reached 40. With only 10 more countries the Treaty will meet the requirement for entry into force. This is just a matter of time. When it is achieved, the struggle for the elimination of nuclear weapons will enter a new phase.

The NPT, which has just marked the 50th year since its entry into force, is not a treaty that perpetuates the nuclear possession by the five superpowers of the USA, Russia, the UK, France and China. Though the 2020 NPT Review Conference was postponed, when it is convened it should reconfirm the agreements reached by the past Conferences, including the unequivocal undertaking to eliminate nuclear arsenals promised in 2000 and the special effort to establish the framework for a world without nuclear weapons agreed upon in 2010, and take further steps to fulfill them. The nuclear weapon states have to be held to account for their attitude to have refused the prohibition of nuclear weapons and pushed off nuclear disarmament.

We call for a world in which all countries cooperate with one another on equal footing and in which the order of peace laid down by the UN Charter is honored. All attempts to resolve conflicts by force should halt immediately. They have to be resolved by peaceful means. Such a world has to be a “nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world.”

The responsibility of the government of Japan, the only A-bombed country in wartime, is particularly important. We urge Japan to join in the TPNW without delay and stand in the van of the global trend towards a “world without nuclear weapons”.

We oppose the construction of a new U.S. military base in Henoko, Okinawa, the expansion of the mission of the Self Defense Forces to include anti-Constitutional preemptive attack on enemy bases, the revision of Article 9 of the Constitution, and all other moves to turn Japan into a “war-waging country” under the Japan-US military alliance. All these run counter to peace in Asia and the world.

We call for the following campaigns:

- Let us listen to Hibakusha: Strengthen our activities for Hibakusha and nuclear test victims to present their testimonies; exhibit A-bomb photo panels to make known the inhumane consequences of the use of nuclear weapons everywhere in the world; and call on the UN and its member states to help promote these activities.

- Let us call on all countries to join in the TPNW and start actions to achieve total elimination of nuclear weapons. Particularly, in the countries that have nuclear weapons or which rely on “nuclear umbrella”, let us strengthen our campaign to press their governments to support and join in the TPNW;

- Let us call on, among others, the nuclear weapon states to implement all promises and agreements made at the past NPT Review Conferences and to fulfill their obligation under Article 6 to negotiate for nuclear disarmament;

- To achieve a world without nuclear weapons, let us build on cooperation between civil society movements and the UN and the governments that pursue the elimination of nuclear weapons, setting the start of the disarmament deliberations in the 75th UNGA session in September 2020 and the next NPT Review Conference as milestones of our actions;

- Let us promote cooperation with various movements working for the reduction in military expenditures, dismantling foreign military bases, dissolution of military alliances, compensation for and solidarity with the victims of Agent Orange and other war damages, promotion of peace education and other tasks against war and for peace.

- Let us ensure success in the global “Peace Wave” campaign scheduled for this coming Aug. 6 through 9 with the abolition of nuclear weapons as its common goal.

- Let us further promote the International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha and other actions for a world without nuclear weapons, in solidarity with broad range of social movements for people’s lives and livings, human rights, prevention of climate change, Zero nuclear power plants, gender equality, and freedom and democracy.

Under the-COVID-19 pandemic, we are meeting at the World Conference against A and H Bombs online, in a different way from the traditional form. Despite facing many challenges, we have reached a conviction through preparing and running of this conference that by exhausting newly emerging possibilities we can further broaden our movement. Towards achieving our goal of a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world, let us build up even broader cooperation and solidarity both in each country and internationally. We convey our determination that with the Hibakusha and with young generation who bear our future, our movement in this A-bombed country will stand in the forefront of such endeavors.

August 2, 2020

Organizing Committee, the World Conference against A and H Bombs

(*1) UNU-WIDER: <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/estimates-impact-covid-19-global-poverty>

(*2) A Message from High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu: <https://www.un.org/disarmament/how-the-covid-19-pandemic-is-affecting-the-work-of-disarmament/>