

Summary of Special Forum IV: A nuclear-free, peaceful Northeast Asia and the role of peace movements

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Special Forum IV was moderated by Nagao Yuri of Zenroren (Japan Confederation of Trade Unions). A total of 162 people (106 on Zoom and 56 on YouTube) participated.

First, Kajimoto Shushi (Executive Board member of Japan Gensuikyo/ General Secretary of Hyogo Gensuikyo) made a keynote report which can be summarized as follows:

“In an international forum held in Seoul in May-June 2019, NGOs in Japan and South Korea agreed to develop campaigns for achieving denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a peace system, breaking away from the US ‘nuclear umbrella’ and military alliances by Japan and South Korea, the promotion of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), and the resolution of historical issues between the two countries with a view to realizing a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia. By discussing the developments of the situation since last spring and the experiences of our activities, in this session we want to make clear what the movements of the two countries should do to develop further solidarity and cooperation between them.”

Six main speakers from both sides referred to the following points: 1) The situation on the Korean Peninsula is getting worse, spurred by the U.S.-China confrontation; 2) the movements of both countries should tackle the common tasks of “nuclear umbrella” and military alliance; 3) Under the coronavirus pandemic, changes of national and social systems are called for; 4) Gender perspectives should be set in place; 5) Solidarity between the Hibakusha in Japan and South Korea is important; 6) Activities for strengthening cooperation between the citizens of the two countries should be concretized; 7) Overcoming historical problems is important and possible; and 8) It is possible to change politics.

Yoshikazu Odagawa of the National Confederation of Trade Unions (Zenroren) said, “Geographically, both Japan and South Korea are located close to China. These two countries have deep relations with it economically and historically. Both of them are bound by military alliances with the US. Now is time for the citizens of the two countries, taking advantage of common points between the two countries, to work positively

together for the creation of a peaceful and nuclear weapon-free Northeast Asia.

President Lee Gyu-yeol of the Korean Atomic Bomb Casualty Association expressed his wish to hold the US atomic bombings to account. His remarks made me recall that a Korean Hibakusha held back tears when he spoke of his A-bomb experience at the Nagasaki Day Rally of last year's World Conference.

Tsugawa Tomohisa, Representative Director of Hyogo Gensuikyo made a report about ongoing joint efforts by citizens of Japan and South Korea on the "Nuclear-Free Kobe Formula" and a plan for "creating a nuclear-free Japan Sea". Active discussion was made. Many opinions were raised by Korean NGOs such as PSPD (People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy), PSSP (People's Solidarity for Social Progress) and some others who were taking part in the World Conference for the first time raised questions.

At the end, Tsuchida Yayoi, Gensuikyo's Assistant Secretary General, called on the participants to enhance cooperation between the citizens of the two countries to achieve common tasks, such as breaking away from the US "nuclear umbrella" and military alliance, promotion of the TPNW and changing the politics of both countries.