

**Messages of Solidarity from Overseas to the
2020 World Conference against A and H Bombs**

National Governments/ International Organizations

Austria

Alexander Van der Bellen, Federal President

Ireland

Michael D. Higgins, President

Laos

Bounnhang Vorachith, President

Viet Nam

Nguyễn Phú Trọng, President/ General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam

International Committee of the Red Cross

Peter Maurer, President



Bundespräsident
Alexander Van der Bellen

75 years ago, the world had to learn of the terrible destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Previously unimaginable suffering was inflicted on the civilian populations of these two cities by atomic bombs. Their haunting legacy still lives on: Both in the lives of those who had to endure the terrible events in August 1945, as well as in the lives of their descendants.

The brave and tireless advocacy of the survivors, the Hibakusha, is an essential contribution to rid the world of the curse of nuclear weapons once and for all. Never again should any human have to suffer at the hands of these inhumane weapons.

This year's anniversary coincides with other threats that brought into focus how misplaced weapon-centric notions of security are. Still today, huge amounts of money are being poured into nuclear arsenals to make them even deadlier. This arms race is diverting essential resources away from human needs and ignores very real threats. The effects of the climate crisis and the current pandemic show how important it is to overcome the focus on arms and to shift to a broader human security paradigm.

Yet in this 75th year since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we can also see that the attachment to nuclear weapons has become a minority view. The overwhelming majority of countries have taken a clear stand. They have shown that nuclear weapons do not provide security but rather are a constant danger to our planet and all of humanity. Their will was clearly demonstrated by the adoption of the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons at the United Nations in 2017. The Treaty finally outlaws these weapons of mass destruction – and its entry into force is rapidly approaching.

Finally, I want to pay tribute to the legacy of the Hibakusha – their tireless efforts and testimonies have shown the devastating reality of nuclear weapons and have greatly contributed to the goal of outlawing them. It is comforting to know that so many Hibakusha will be still with us when we will witness the entry into force of the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons.

A. Van der Bellen



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

MESSAGE FROM MICHAEL D. HIGGINS, PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST ATOMIC AND HYDROGEN BOMBS

HIROSHIMA, JAPAN

SUNDAY, 2ND – SUNDAY, 9TH AUGUST, 2020

It is a great honour and privilege to once more add Ireland's voice in support of the Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, and particularly so as your essential work to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons must continue in this time of global emergency. As your Conference this year is convened in a different format, please be assured that the absence of that meeting in person is by no means the absence of solidarity on this important issue.

It has been 75 years since the catastrophic atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The contribution of the *hibakusha* in these years to the efforts to rid the world of nuclear weapons has been invaluable and morally inspiring. Their stories keep the purpose of disarmament at the forefront of our minds. We do not pursue it in a vacuum. We do so in order to ensure we never again repeat the horrors inflicted upon the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We do so because we have seen the long-term and generational consequences of nuclear weapons use on the *hibakusha*. We know that we will never be equipped to deal with the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear weapons explosion, so we must continue to work ardently together to eliminate the risk entirely.

It is a stark reminder this year, as humanity is suffering from the Covid-19 pandemic and the rapidly growing impacts of climate change, that we have still not rid the world of one of the greatest threats to humanity, nuclear weapons. In fact, we have sadly witnessed growing international tensions and increasing pressure on multilateral processes holding us back from achieving our nuclear disarmament goals.

More than ever, we must recommit to working in unity to address these existential threats and find collaborative solutions to these challenges. This year we marked the 50th anniversary of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), which had its origins in the 'Irish resolutions' at the UN in the 1950s and 1960s.

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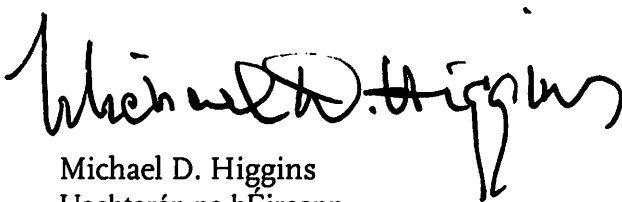
Today, while the NPT is undoubtedly the cornerstone of our multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime – it is unfortunate that the implementation of the disarmament pillar is still falling far behind. In the current context it is more important than ever to reaffirm our commitment to find solutions to the challenges of nuclear disarmament. Ireland is fully committed to this path.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is at the centre of this commitment. The historic achievement of the TPNW would not have been possible without the invaluable input of the *hibakusha* and the survivors of nuclear weapons testing over many years. The Treaty provides a tangible pathway for states to meet the disarmament obligations of the NPT and moves us a step closer to achieving the goal of the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

We could not have expected to be marking this important anniversary separated from each other in these circumstances. Just as the Covid-19 pandemic has caused us to reflect on our systems, our established structures and the way we live our lives, we have also been presented with an opportunity to look to the future and consider the ways we might make change for the better.

The pandemic has shown us that there is no safety or security in arsenals of destructive weapons. Much as Covid-19 is a global problem requiring a global response, so too is the threat faced from nuclear weapons. Now more than ever we must work together to bring an end to this threat and provide a safer and more secure world for all of humanity.

I wish this Conference every success, particularly in the unique circumstances in which it is being held this year, and I commend you once again for continuing your critical work in this area.



Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland

10 July, 2020

(Unofficial translation)

Vientiane, 23 July 2020

Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to the organizing committee and all participants in the 2020 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs to be held on 02-09 August 2020 (online).

I highly value the convening of this World Conference, which this year marks the 75th anniversary of the remembrance of the dreadful loss of and aftermath effects caused by the atomic bombings on the people's lives and properties in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945.

I am confident that this year's conference will provide a good opportunity to further enhance the international community's cooperation in fighting against and preventing the use of atomic and hydrogen bombs in order to build the world with lasting peace, stability and free from weapons of mass destruction in the future.

Once again, on behalf of the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I wish the 2020 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs a great success.

(signed)

Bounnhang VORACHITH

His Excellency Hiroshi TAKA
Co-Chair, the Steering Committee
The 2020 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs

**PRESIDENT
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Hanoi, 30 July, 2020

MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

To: World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2020

On behalf of the State and people of Vietnam, I avail myself this opportunity to extend our warmest solidarity greetings to Japanese and international delegates participating in the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2020.

Over the past 75 years since the United States dropped 2 atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6 and 9, August, 1945, the world has witnessed strenuous efforts of Japan to recover from losses and sufferings to become one of the world's biggest economies, which gain the world's admiration.

Vietnam shares the deepest sympathies with Japanese people as we also have had to overcome the severe consequences of wars, including those of Agent Orange/ dioxin for our people and environment. Vietnam is always happy to join efforts with the international community to totally abolish nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in order to build a peaceful world for today and the future. We are proud to be one of the first countries in the world to sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

In the current difficult context, especially with the unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic, I strongly believe that the online World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2020 will be a very good opportunity for more peace lovers to be able to join and make contributions, thus conveying peace messages to the world leadership and bringing messages of solidarity to victims of nuclear weapons, Agent Orange and other war crimes.

The Party, State and people of Vietnam will always join hands with the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, Japan's and world's peace movement in the struggles for a future without threats from nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction, for a world of peace, security, stability, justice and prosperity.

I would like to express my sincere and profound gratitude to the State and people of Japan, as well as peace-loving people in the world for your fine sentiment and great support for Vietnam during our past struggles for national independence and reunification and the present national construction and development.

I would like to once again convey my heartfelt sentiment to the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Japan in general.

May the Conference a great success!

NGUYEN PHU TRONG

General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam Central Committee

President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Message of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) To the 2020 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs

August 2020

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (*Gensuikyo*) for its long-standing efforts to preserve and uphold the painful memories caused by the atomic bombings in 1945 and provide assistance to victims and survivors.

The testimonies of the *hibakusha* tell a devastating story—of excruciating suffering, senseless loss and unfathomable courage. By prompting us to imagine the unimaginable, think the unthinkable and give voice to the unspeakable, the testimonies provide a crucial reminder that nuclear weapons are, ultimately, a threat to human beings and to our common humanity.

The nuclear bombs that exploded in the early days of August 1945 were uniquely horrific and terrifying weapons of war. The ICRC and the Japanese Red Cross Society witnessed first-hand the suffering and devastation caused by the explosion, as they tried, in near-impossible conditions, to assist the dying and injured. Based on these experiences, the ICRC concluded, less than a month after the explosions, that these weapons must never again be used and banned for all time.

Yet, for 75 years, the world has lived under the dark shadow of nuclear annihilation. There are more than 13,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many on high alert status, ready to be launched at a moment's notice. Disturbingly, the risk that nuclear weapons may be used again is today growing to levels not seen since the end of the Cold War. Given what we know about the immediate and long-term impact of any use of nuclear weapons, this is a reality we cannot accept.

We remain deeply concerned that the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons will make it impossible for the ICRC to fulfil its humanitarian mission. We know that any use of nuclear weapons would cause insurmountable challenges for any organization attempting to provide humanitarian relief, and that adequate assistance capacities do not exist at national or international levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored that public health-care systems face significant challenges in responding to large-scale health emergencies. This should remind us of the insurmountable challenges that any use of nuclear weapons would present to health-care systems and humanitarian response capabilities. What we cannot prepare for, we must prevent.

Three years ago, in response to the brave testimonies of the *hibakusha* and long-standing appeals of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and determined activists, States adopted the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Answering a call that echoes through the decades since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Treaty comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons and makes clear that any use of these weapons is morally and legally unacceptable.

As we look towards bringing the TPNW to life as a new instrument of international humanitarian law, we must strive to keep the testimonies of the *hibakusha* at the center of the debate. Their testimonies are the strongest argument for the prohibition and elimination of these uniquely horrific and unjustifiable weapons.

75 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we must be clear: We have waited long enough. Too often, the international community has been unable to prevent foreseeable crises. We still have a chance to prevent a global nuclear catastrophe. Our children and future generations should not have to bear the burden of our inaction.

I wish you every success for this conference and for your future work.

Peter Maurer
President
International Committee of the Red Cross