

2020 World Conference against A and H Bombs – Hiroshima Day Rally
Keynote Address on Behalf of the Organizer
Tomida Koji, Chair of the Drafting Committee

Friends, welcome to the Hiroshima Day rally of the 2020 World Conference against A and H Bombs. I would like to make the Keynote Address on behalf of the Organizing Committee and explain the “Organizers’ Statement” released at the International Meeting held online on August 2.

We decided to hold this year’s World Conference online due to the global pandemic of the new coronavirus. As the “Organizers’ Statement” says, we are convinced that it is possible to further develop our movement if we make full use of the emerging conditions, despite the various ordeals we have faced in the course of preparing and holding the World Conference.

I am pleased to inform you that we have special guests in this rally: Nakamitsu Izumi, UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Thomas Hajnoczi, Director for Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs; and Hiroshima Mayor Matsui Kazumi, all of whom have played a very important role in achieving the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and paving the way for a world without nuclear weapons. Please join me in welcoming and expressing our heartfelt gratitude and respect to them.

Friends, it is 75 years since the United States dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima. By the end of 1945, more than 140,000 people had died in Hiroshima. Those who barely survived have for 75 years endured after-effects of the atomic bombing, social discrimination, and poverty, and their children and grandchildren are also worried about their health.

Nuclear weapons are the “weapons of evil.” The tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated anywhere, whatever the reason.

The milestone of 75 years is very significant for the Hibakusha’s earnest desire to see “nuclear weapons eliminated in their lifetime.” We must make an all-out effort, together with the United Nations, national governments and civil society, so that the Hibakusha can witness a “world without nuclear weapons.”

Friends, as the Organizing Committee's Statement says, the coronavirus pandemic has taken nearly 700,000 lives worldwide. The poor, immigrants, refugees, indigenous people, and other socially vulnerable people have been most seriously affected by the pandemic. All this highlights how neoliberal policies are responsible for environmental disruption, the growing poverty rate, the widening economic inequality, as well as cutbacks in healthcare and welfare services.

At the same time, it is an undeniable fact that even as the global poverty rate rises, some two trillion dollars is being squandered on the world's military buildup, including the development of new types of nuclear weapons. Regarding these developments, the United Nations recently said: "In the 75-year history of the United Nations, the folly of seeking security in vast destructive arsenals has never been clearer."

As the world is facing a serious pandemic situation, we should urge our respective governments to end national security policies that rely on military force and adopt policies that put the life and security of each individual first.

Friends, as the Statement points out, nuclear weapons remain a threat to humanity. Nearly 14,000 nuclear warheads still exist in the world. Some 2,000 nuclear missiles are ready to be launched within a few minutes. Scientists warn that the use of even a tiny fraction of them can have far more destructive consequences than the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs. Although we have fortunately been able to avert the worst-case scenario so far, the danger of nuclear war will persist as long as nuclear weapons exist. We must not leave humankind's security to mere "luck" any more.

International cooperation is essential for resolving nuclear and other global crises. Nevertheless, the great powers are persistent in asserting their national interest before anything, even in the midst of a pandemic situation, further exacerbating confrontation among them. The United States and Russia are emphasizing their readiness to use nuclear weapons and continuing to develop and deploy new nuclear weapons. Other nuclear-weapon states also refuse to change away from their reliance on "nuclear deterrents."

All this makes clearer the urgent need to eliminate nuclear weapons. This is why the global trend to demand this continues to develop. We should be deeply convinced of this progress. The movement of national governments and civil society achieved a historic accomplishment in adopting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and in steadily driving the pro-nuclear forces into a corner. The treaty has

been ratified by 40 countries. Just 10 more countries need to ratify for the treaty to enter into force. Its entry into force is a matter of time.

Friends, the 2020 NPT Review Conference had to be postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic. But, as the Statement says, we must reconfirm the agreements reached by past review conferences, including the “unequivocal undertaking” of 2000 for the nuclear weapon states to eliminate their nuclear arsenals. We must make headway towards the fulfillment of this promise. The nuclear-weapon states must be severely criticized for rejecting the prohibition of nuclear weapons and shelving nuclear disarmament.

As the Statement stresses, we seek a world in which all countries can cooperate on an equal footing and demand a peaceful world order as articulated in the UN Charter. Any attempt to resolve a dispute by the use of force must be immediately halted so that a resolution by peaceful means can be sought.

The responsibility of the government of Japan, the only country to suffer nuclear attack in war, is particularly great. We strongly demand that the Japanese government immediately join the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and play its part in the forefront of the world movement calling for a “world without nuclear weapons.” We also strongly oppose any attempt to turn Japan into a country that wages war under the Japan-US military alliance. In this regard, we oppose the construction of a new US military base in the Henoko district of Okinawa, the expansion of the role of the Self-Defense Forces to cover attack against enemy bases in violation of the Constitution, and a revision of the Constitution’s war-renouncing Article 9.

Based on the above-stated view, the Statement is proposing a 7-point action plan, including the Global Peace Wave action through August 9, and the International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha.

Let us further increase solidarity and cooperation both internationally and nationally, for the realization of a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world. I conclude my report on behalf of the organizer by expressing the determination of the movement in Japan, the atomic-bombed country, to stand in the forefront of action, together with the Hibakusha, as well as young people, who are the main players in the future world.