



ỦY BAN HÒA BÌNH VIỆT NAM / VIETNAM PEACE COMMITTEE

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2020 WORLD CONFERENCE AGAINST A & H BOMBS

*Speech by Dong Huy Cuong
Secretary General
Vietnam Peace Committee*

Distinguished guests,

Dear friends,

This is a very special year as we are struggling against nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. I don't have the chance to meet all my friends in a traditional face-to-face meeting, but I am happy that I am able to contribute to world peace. Please allow me to thank the Japan Council against A & H Bombs (GENSUIKYO) for giving me this special chance.

This year, I cannot handover the Message of Solidarity from the HE. Mr. Nguyen Phu Trong, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in front of the large audience as we did every year, but I hope I can still bring you the solidarity spirit of not only the President, but also 90 million Vietnamese people, those who have experienced the pain of war and those who have never.

Friends,

75 years have passed since the atomic bombs were dropped in the two beautiful cities. Japanese people still feel the pain of Hibakusha. In Vietnam, we still feel the pain of millions of war victims, including victims of Agent Orange though the war ended 40 years ago. We all have tried to do a lot to support them, but is far from easing their pain.

As part of our effort to support hibakushas and other war victims, the Vietnam Peace Committee has launched signature campaigns in support of hibakusha's appeal for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We are happy that in 2015, we collected over 1.5 million signatures. In this campaign from 2019 to 2020, we have been working with GENSUIKYO, the Vietnam Association of Victims of Agent Orange and other people organisations, universities, museums, and local authorities across Vietnam to organise a variety of exchange activities. Via such activities, Vietnamese people are more aware of the threats of nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as the need to abolish them. Also via such activities and other organised in different part of Vietnam, about one million signatures have been collected to support the campaign. Although we cannot reach 1 million due to the COVID-19 pandemic,



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we are proud that we are part of the world struggle against nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

For three years we have talked about the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 2017 and this year I want to once again repeat it. We are pleased that 40 countries have ratified the treaty (including three ASEAN countries: Laos, Thailand and Vietnam) and we need “only” another 10 ratifications to make it effect. But it is no easy task and whether it comes into effect remains an open question. Moreover, nuclear weapons are still being developed, manufactured, and tested around the world as a pretext for national security. In addition, militarist values and defence budgets continue to increase; there are still conflicts and disputes in ‘hot spots’ including South China Sea and East China Sea.

In such recent, ASEAN, one of the world’s nuclear free zone, is confronting various challenges, especially in the context of unprecedented Covid-19, which has made geopolitical rivalries more complicated. Even several leaders and countries are exploiting the pandemic to pursue their own purposes, violating international law, making the situation more complicated and threatening peace and human security.

Such challenges are imposing further burden on the soldiers of peace lovers and activists around the world. That is also the reason why we are here again to work together for a world without war, without nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; for justice for Hibakusha, victims of Agent Orange and other war victims. We need to create synergies to bring pressure to bear upon governments to totally abolish nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, put people’s lives ahead of profit, abide by international law, not use force or threaten to use force against other countries, and respect other countries’ sovereignty.

I strongly believe that the World Conference Against A & H Bombs will continue to serve as a platform for our solidarity and cooperation.

The Vietnam Peace Committee is more than happy to be part of the peace-loving forces in the world to make sure that such tragedies as those in Hiroshima & Nagasaki, Vietnam and other countries shall never be repeated.

Two years ago, I said I were looking forward to a day all peace activists and movements be made redundant. Today, I would like to repeat it. I am not only looking forward to the day when there are no threats of war. I will be joining hands with peace lovers around the world to work for it.



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May I wish for a fruitful conference, for a beautiful world free from nuclear weapons, and for the good health and happiness of all of you.

No more Hiroshima! No more Nagasaki!

Justice for Hibakushas! Justice for all war victims!

Thank you all for your attention./.