

2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs
Hiroshima Day Rally
August 6, 2021

Organizer's Keynote Report

Greetings to all participants in the Hiroshima Day Rally of the 2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs. Allow me on behalf of the Organizing Committee to deliver the keynote report and also explain the Organizer's Statement released at the International Meeting of the World Conference on August 2.

The Organizer's statement at the outset says that this year's World Conference, which is being held following the historic entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), is going to be a place to renew our pledge to move toward the complete elimination of nuclear weapons, at a time when people all around the world are deepening their concern for the dignity of human lives due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Seventy-six years have elapsed since an atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. The bomb devastated the city instantly and took the lives of about 140,000 people by the end of that year. As the statement points out, we must not forget that most of the victims were women, the elderly, children and other innocent citizens. The horrible consequences were likened to "hell on earth." No other weapons had ever caused such massive and indiscriminate death and destruction. Those who narrowly survived later suffered from delayed effects and heart break, having lost their loved ones. Hibakusha, whose average age is now over 83, continue to talk about their tragic experiences and warn that "humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist." As the Organizer's statement appeals to the world, this tragedy should never be repeated. Now that we have made an historic achievement in banning nuclear weapons, we should stand up and take action in high spirits for the elimination of nuclear weapons and to ensure the survival of the human race and our future.

The Organizer's statement sharply points out that humanity is still threatened by the danger of nuclear annihilation. There still exist about 13,000 nuclear warheads in the world. With confrontations and tensions between nuclear powers, the risk of actual use of nuclear weapons is increasing. The United States and Russia are said to keep 2,000 nuclear missiles ready for launch on warning. Also, China, Britain, and France intend to reinforce their respective nuclear arsenals and strengthen nuclear operations. Nuclear flashpoints persist in India, Pakistan, and the Korean Peninsula. The Organizer's statement correctly points out that the solution of international conflict by peaceful means is the principle of international politics. All parties should abide by the UN Charter and relevant international law and put an end without delay to all armed conflicts and any other actions leading to such conflicts. The ongoing reinforcement, development and

deployment of nuclear arsenals must be cancelled immediately. By no means can nuclear weapons defend peace. Military intimidation only increases the risk of the use of nuclear weapons. Facing the reality that there can be no winner in a nuclear war, we must get rid of the dangerous delusion of “nuclear deterrence.”

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force on January 22, making nuclear weapons illegal under international law. As the Organizer’s statement points out, the more countries sign and ratify the TPNW, the more firmly the illegality of nuclear weapons is established. Surrounded by international law, neither nuclear-weapon countries nor countries relying on nuclear weapons can escape from the impacts of this development. We will continue to urge national governments to support and participate in the TPNW and work for its expansion. Building on this treaty, let us move forward to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Organizer’s statement says that the nuclear weapons possessing countries must echo the voices of the world that are reflected in the treaty’s entry into force. The Nuclear Five must implement without any further delay their obligation under Article 6 of the NPT to negotiate nuclear disarmament. The NPT Review Conference slated for next year is strictly called upon to confirm and advance what has been agreed upon, including the “unequivocal undertaking” to achieve the “total elimination” of their “nuclear arsenals”, the establishment of a “framework” to achieve a “world without nuclear weapons”, as well as the establishment of a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Let us strongly urge the nuclear weapon states to sincerely fulfill all these agreements and obligations.

As the Organizer’s statement correctly points out, if we are to move forward toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, while preventing their use, it is essential to work both to build international opinion in support of the TPNW and to change national politics in the nuclear-armed states and dependent countries. Since the TPNW took form, we have seen new positive developments linked to the growing public support for the TPNW among NATO members. As the Organizer’s statement strongly demands, it is time now to break away from pro-nuclear weapon politics by building overwhelming public support for joining the treaty.

The Organizer’s statement points out that the choice to be made by Japan, the only country to have suffered a nuclear catastrophe firsthand, will have a far-reaching impact. If the Japanese government supports the TPNW in response to the nationwide demand and breaks away from the reliance on “nuclear deterrence”, it will hugely increase the momentum of the current global movement towards the abolition of nuclear weapons, and such a development will certainly bring a positive change in the increasingly tense Northeast Asian situation. The Organizer’s statement is calling on the nation to act now to build overwhelming public support beyond differences in thought, belief and political affiliation in order to change the current policies that keep rejecting the TPNW. Friends, let us devote all our energies to bring about historic change in politics in the

forthcoming general elections. Also, let us develop our movement in solidarity with the movement opposing an attempt to turn Japan into a country that will wage war under the Japan-US military alliance.

In the COVID-19 pandemic, large numbers of people have lost their lives or health and are suffering from widening social gap, poverty and loss of their jobs. At the same time, global spending on the military, including nuclear weapons, has reached 1,981 billion dollars. The Organizer's statement correctly points out that military strength is useless against the coronavirus pandemic, which has claimed more than 4.2 million lives in the world. The need now is to put all energies into substantial disarmament and a peaceful resolution of disputes and into the effort to contain the pandemic and save people's lives. The Organizer's statement stresses that the entry into force of the TPNW presents the prospect of a world moving away from superpower hegemony and towards an equal participation by all. This has been made possible by the cooperation between civil societies and governments of various countries. We should be convinced of this outcome.

Standing firm on the position I have just mentioned, the Organizer's statement proposes to launch actions on six fronts with a view to attaining a "nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world", a more hopeful world as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic.

I hope you will respond to this call and renew the determination to stand at the forefront of these actions together with the Hibakusha and younger people who bear the future. By confirming this determination, I conclude my report on behalf of the Organizing Committee. Thank you.