



Bundespräsident
Alexander Van der Bellen

Nuclear weapons are the most indiscriminate weapon ever invented. Their damage cannot be measured only by the immediate destruction they cause but by the unimaginable suffering that continues to last through decades and generations. Yet unlike biological and chemical weapons, these inhumane weapons remain in arsenals of nine states today. The ill-fated belief that the threat of global devastation through nuclear weapons can be the foundation of sustainable security and stability unfortunately persists.

The Hibakusha have been tireless in their advocacy for the past 76 years to warn humanity and make sure that the world knows about those fateful days in 1945 and the consequences ever since. We owe them deep gratitude, but more importantly, we owe them progress: progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

As we commemorate the 76th anniversary of the first use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, let us move away from the misconception that nuclear weapons are a suitable means of security and instead take heed from the findings of their catastrophic humanitarian consequences and inherent risks. It is urgent to end the resurgent nuclear arms race with arsenals being built-up and modernised for decades to come, as well as a renewed emphasis on nuclear weapons and their use in national security doctrines.

A large majority of countries has already demonstrated that they understand nuclear weapons as a constant threat to the very survival of humanity. They demand that their legitimate security concerns are taken into consideration rather than perpetually put at risk by the policies of nuclear deterrence. With the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, an important step – the setting of a legal norm prohibiting these weapons – was achieved. It is the first concrete step in a long time towards the elimination of nuclear weapons for which the Hibakusha and you here at the conference have been fighting.

I am very pleased that the first meeting of States Parties of the TPNW will be held in my country, Austria, as one of the main initiators of the treaty. I hope that many of you will be able to travel to Vienna to join in marking this milestone with us. I trust that you will continue your tireless advocacy to inspire other countries also to be there; even States that have not yet signed the TPNW. We need to continue to engage all stakeholders in a dialogue on the humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons and the need for urgent progress towards a world without nuclear weapons.



A. Van der Bellen



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Message from President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins

World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs

2nd – 9th August 2021

May I say how honoured I am to provide this message of support from Ireland to the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs.

While the world continues to face the challenges of the global pandemic, we cannot forget the core purpose of the vital work of you and others to rid the world of nuclear weapons and to assist in the achievement of a safer and more peaceful future for all of humanity. As UN Secretary-General Guterres commented recently, nothing less than the very survival of humanity and civilisation is at stake.

The year 2021 opened with a significant development, with the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. Ireland was proud to have enacted the Treaty on 6th August 2020, on the very date that marked the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. Ireland did so on that day in recognition of the harm endured by the victims and *hibakusha*, and the need to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again.

The contribution of the *hibakusha* and civil society was, and remains, central to the Treaty's creation, and now its implementation. I salute them for the vital role they play in disarmament education. It is important that the experiences and legacy of the *hibakusha* be carried forward for the next generation, so that they are aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and are inspired to work for their elimination.

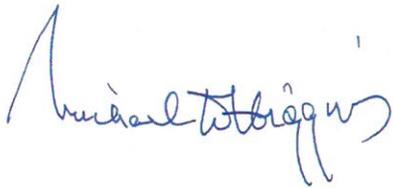
The world is facing wholly unprecedented challenges, with not only the Covid-19 pandemic touching all of our lives in different ways, but also the challenges of climate change, geo-political tensions, and with 41 million of our global citizens facing famine, as Secretary-General Guterres reminds us in his recent urgent appeal to Heads of States and Governments, it is imperative for our safe, peaceful and equitable co-existence that we work in cooperation to find sustainable solutions to these challenges. Nuclear disarmament is at the core of a more sustainable, more secure future. The pandemic has starkly illustrated that risks, however unlikely they may seem, can materialise with such devastating global consequences.

It is in this broader context that the elimination of nuclear weapons takes on even greater urgency. Basic morality tells us that it is impossible to justify the existence of a technology that is so indiscriminately destructive and harmful as nuclear weapons.

How regrettable it is that the human endeavour and vast resources that are involved in developing and maintaining nuclear weapons – over 13,000 of which remain stockpiled and deployed globally – that resources are not instead directed to fund health, education, food and water security, and other developmental and humanitarian purposes.

Ireland has a historic attachment to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, which remains the cornerstone of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation regime. It is more important than ever that all states commit to make progress on nuclear disarmament, and Ireland stands ready to work with all parties to do so.

I commend your resilience in convening this vital Conference in these challenging, exceptional circumstances which add weight to the significance of your message heard around the world, and I send my best wishes for the success of the Conference this year, and reiterate the support of Ireland for your important work.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "D. Higgins".

Michael D. Higgins

Uachtarán na hÉireann

President of Ireland

Provisional translation

Vientiane, 29 July 2021

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and 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 2021 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs to be held on 02-09 August 2021 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan in the platform of online.

I am delighted to witness that the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force on 22 January 2021, which would be implemented in a constructive manner in order to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

I am confident that this conference will be a corner stone for participants to pave the way to further enhance the cooperation of international community as well as strengthen activities to fight against and prevent 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 years ahead.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, wish the 2021 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs a great success.

(Signed)

Thongloun SISOULITH

His Excellency Hiroshi TAKA
Co-Chair, the Steering Committee
The 2021 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs

Tokyo

**PRESIDENT
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM**

Hanoi, 15 July, 2021

MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

To: The World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2021

On behalf of the State and people of Vietnam and in my own name, I avail myself of this opportunity to extend our warmest greetings of friendship to all international and Japanese delegates participating in the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2021.

Seventy six years having elapsed since the atomic bombing of the two cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, all sad memories of this disaster should never be allowed to be forgotten. We share the deepest sympathies with the Japanese people over their huge losses and truly hope that not any more nations will have to bear similar sufferings in the future.

Having undergone devastating consequences of wars, particularly Agent Orange / dioxin, a kind of chemical weapon causing death to millions of humans and lingering terrible damage to the environment, Vietnam is always consistent with its policy against nuclear weapons and stands among the first countries to have signed and ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. We are glad that the Treaty has officially been in full force since January 22nd, 2021. This results from not only the efforts of governments but also the strong commitment and support of international and Japanese peace movements. Currently, the world is still faced with unpredictable dangers of nuclear weapons as well as utterly complicated developments due to major powers' competition, extreme nationalism, great-powerism, and unilateral moves by major countries at such hot spots as the South China Sea/ East Sea and the East China Sea, as well as non-traditional security challenges, including climate change, epidemics, etc.

Despite all this, it is my conviction that the solidarity and cooperation of all forces of peace and progress in the world, particularly of those participating in this World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2021, will help build a world of peace, security, stability, development and prosperity without nuclear weapons. The Communist Party, State, people and peace movement of Vietnam will continue to join hands with you for the materialization of this objective.

I would like once more, on behalf of the State and people of Vietnam, to express our sincere and profound gratitude to the State and people of Japan, as well as peace-

loving people the world over, for their heartfelt sympathy and valuable support for Vietnam during our past struggles for national independence and reunification as well as our present efforts in national construction and development.

Allow me to convey my friendly and sincere greetings and best wishes to the people of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and all over Japan.

May I wish all participants in the Conference good health, security and happiness.

May the Conference record splendid success.

NGUYEN XUAN PHUC

President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

**Message of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
To the 2021 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs**

August 2021

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) extends its deep appreciation and 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 to provide assistance to victims and survivors.

76 years have passed from the days when nuclear weapons – among the most horrific and inhumane weapons ever created – were unleashed upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The ICRC and the Japanese Red Cross Society witnessed first-hand the suffering and devastation that followed as they tried, in near-impossible conditions, to assist the dying and injured. Faced with helplessness in front of this disaster of vast proportions, we called for the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons – and to this call we have stood ever since.

But the story of nuclear weapons is not only one of horror, fear and pain – it is also a story of courage and determination. The testimonies of the hibakusha tell this story, and it was they who inspired and drove the international community to achieve the unimaginable: the negotiation and adoption of an international legally-binding instrument making nuclear weapons illegal once and for all.

There are currently more than 13,000 nuclear weapons in the world, many on high alert status, ready to be launched at a moment's notice. The risk that they may be used again remains very high. To believe that this risk can be eliminated while nuclear weapons still exist is, in itself, a risk humanity cannot afford to take. To cling on to nuclear weapons as an instrument of security is an equally dangerous fallacy: for most States, nuclear weapons are today a major source of insecurity for their populations and for the future of our planet.

We remain deeply concerned at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons, to which the international community would be unable to respond. We know that no adequate assistance capacities to provide humanitarian relief in such a case exist at national or international levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the significant shortcomings of public health-care systems when responding to large-scale health emergencies. This only pales in comparison to 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.

On 22 January 2021, the landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force. The testimonies and experience of the hibakusha, the long-standing appeals of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the tireless efforts of determined activists, led to this historic moment. The TPNW comprehensively prohibits nuclear weapons and makes clear that any use of these weapons is morally and legally unacceptable. It is extremely doubtful that any use of nuclear weapons could ever be compatible with international humanitarian law, the law regulating conduct in war.

This treaty exists because we cannot afford to forget, lest the horrors of history are repeated. Let us all strive to keep the testimonies of the hibakusha alive, as a beacon to guide humanity towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

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

Peter Maurer
President
International Committee of the Red Cross