

**International Meeting
2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs**

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(Nihon Hidankyo)**

I am honored to be given this opportunity to bring to you all my greetings of solidarity at the International Meeting of the 2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the founding of the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo). I am observing this commemorative year with mixed feelings of joy and a sense of crisis.

The entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) has given me a lot of joy. At the same time, the Hibakusha, who went through an atomic bomb hell, are aging and dying, and I have a sense of crisis that the A-bomb survivors will be gone in the near future.

I was caught by the atomic bombing in Nagasaki on August 9, 1945. I was on the street in front of my home, about two kilometers from ground zero. I was five years and seven months old. My mother sustained burns to the whole of her face and chest. I also got burns on a half of my face. We rushed into a shelter. It was full of groans and cries of pain. My older brother's friend, who had burns on his whole body, died soon. Next day I passed along the right bank of the Urakami River and reached Michinoo. I was struck to see the town had been turned into a dead town with no buildings, but with dead bodies scattered around and floating over one another in the river. The river was full of people groaning and seeking water and help.

Nihon Hidankyo was founded in 1956, eleven years after the atomic bombings. At its founding congress, Nihon Hidankyo published a "Message to the World" that pledged to save ourselves as well as humankind from the nuclear crisis by making known our A-bomb experiences to the world. We have since made efforts to let people know what nuclear weapons are and what the atomic bombs brought about to humans. We have tirelessly carried out activities calling for the realization of our two demands: prevention of nuclear war and elimination of nuclear weapons; and state compensation for the A-bomb damage.

Our "Message to the World" says, *"After eleven long years since the atomic bombing,*

we could at last meet here, for the first time from all over Japan. ... We have acquired this courage to stand up, thanks to the World Conference of last August. ... We have, at today's gathering, commemorated the dead and talked of the inexpressible sentiments piled up in these long years. But our unending talks ... were not for getting a consolation or relief for the time being. They had the purpose of setting ourselves up, holding hands in hands, resolutely. We would appeal to the world what we must, would demand the government what we need... Thus, we have reassured our will to save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves.... Humanity must never again inflict nor suffer the sacrifice and torture we have experienced."

Ever since the enactment of the Atomic Bomb Survivors Medical Care Act of 1957, the government has limited the coverage of the Hibakusha relief measures to the victims of the initial radiation of the A-bombs, which is far from the scope of the actual damage and suffering. The recent "Black Rain" lawsuit symbolically demonstrated the failings of this policy of the government. In 1980, the Council on Basic Problems of the Atomic Bombing and Measures for the Survivors, a private advisory body of the Minister of Health and Welfare, issued a recommendation, saying that under the emergency of a war started by the State, "all people ought to endure the sacrifice equally". Here we can find the root of the Japanese government policy of abandoning the Hibakusha, turning its back on the TPNW and driving the population to fight in wars. We must change this by all means possible.

Nihon Hidankyo angrily reacted to the recommendation and drew up the "Basic Demand of the Atomic Bomb Victims." It said: "We hibakusha have been describing the realities of the damage of the atomic bombing and appealing on our suffering, because we want that no one else should ever suffer the hell we have experienced. "Make no more Hibakusha" is our appeal, for which we give our lives. It is the aspiration also of all the people of Japan and all over the world."

The Hibakusha Movement led by Nihon Hidankyo is not a movement of the Hibakusha alone. It has been built up in cooperation with the people of Japan and the rest of the world. Especially, we have been supported by our friends participating in the World Conference. We want to pay respect to the World Conference against A and H Bombs that has developed greatly over many years, and we are grateful for that.

The world is undergoing major changes. We can hear an underground rumbling that might move mountains. Movements to save humanity and Mother Earth are growing, represented by those working on climate change, the elimination of nuclear weapons, gender equality, opposition to racial discrimination and for the LGBTQ. People are increasingly assertive in their respective areas.

The Hibakusha are wondering how many more years they can continue their movement. There is no end to worries about how the unprecedented movement of the Hibakusha, led by Nihon Hidankyo, can be handed down to the next generation. It is highly unlikely that the Hibakusha exposed to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will be exposed again to nuclear attacks, but there is a danger that the people of future generations could become Hibakusha.

The cause of saving humankind and Mother Earth should be led by the global citizens' movement. I am sure that it can be done by many individual movements and a united movement. I must point out that the solidarity movement needs to grow more. I want to conclude my statement by expressing my desire that a movement which brings all people together will be built up.

Thank you for your attention.