

Declaration of the International Meeting

Seventy one years ago, the USA used nuclear bombs for the first time against humanity by releasing atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With tremendous destructive power and radiation, the two bombs burned out the cities and claimed the lives of about 210,000 people by the end of the year. It was a hell on earth. The Hibakusha who survived then had to suffer from latent effects and social discrimination for many subsequent years. Such inhumane weapons should not be used again in any circumstances whatsoever.

The nuclear powers still maintain more than 15,000 nuclear warheads. Not a small number of them are on alert for launch. The concern for the outbreak of nuclear war due to deteriorating regional tensions is real. A recent study shows that even if only a small percentage of existing nuclear weapons are used, it would cause serious climate change and would bring the human race to the brink of extinction. The elimination of nuclear weapons is an urgent task for the very survival of the humanity.

By international law and justice, weapons of mass destruction are widely perceived to be illegal. As biological and chemical weapons have been banned by international treaties, nuclear weapons should be banned immediately and made illegal.

At present, a new move to open the door to a “world without nuclear weapons” is developing. Substantial discussions for a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons have begun at the United Nations.

The 70th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted by majority a number of resolutions calling for the start of negotiations on a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons. With the support of more than 70% of the member states, it also decided to convene an open-ended working group (OEWG) to discuss “concrete effective legal measures” to achieve “a world without nuclear weapons”. The meetings of the OEWG turned out to be an epoch-making opportunity where substantive matters for a treaty to ban nuclear weapons were discussed, and the convening of a conference in 2017 to negotiate a treaty was proposed. We cordially request that the OEWG include the commencement of negotiations for a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons in the recommendations submitted to the coming session of the UN General Assembly.

The motive power of these developments is found in the anti-nuclear peace movement all around the world, including the Hibakusha who have kept warning about the inhumanity and atrocity of nuclear weapons. The appeals of Hibakusha in the international political arenas have elicited huge responses. Through the 2015 NPT Review Conference, where international anti-nuclear peace movements rallied, the voices demanding legally binding measures have expanded ever more widely.

The forthcoming session of the UN General Assembly in autumn will have discussions, focusing on the report of the OEWG. To ban nuclear weapons by treaty and eliminate them is the long standing core demand of the World Conference against A and H Bombs. Now is the time to make every possible effort to build overwhelming public support to achieve this goal.

The five nuclear powers of the USA, Russia, the UK, France and China are working in unison to counter this development. Their posture and that of their allies who follow them is clearly a major obstacle put in a way to achieve a “world without nuclear weapons”.

They boycotted the OEWG, and their allies who spoke for them, including Japan, oppose any immediate step to take to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons and insist that the “step-by-step” is the only practical approach. History proves, however, that this approach does not really lead us one step closer towards nuclear disarmament. It is an approach that puts off the abolition of nuclear weapons into indefinite future.

While being defensive before the argument on humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, the nuclear powers still cling to the “nuclear deterrence” doctrine, saying that the security aspects should also be considered. The essence of this argument is to try to justify the use or threat to use nuclear weapons against other countries to protect so-called national interest, which is the most dangerous concept. Besides, deterrence has actually induced nuclear proliferation in the name of “self-defense”, and thus helped spread threat to peace.

Opening a door to a “world without nuclear weapons” will only be possible by defeating such absurdity in the posture of the nuclear powers.

The focal point today is a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons. We must make every effort to strengthen the movement and public opinion demanding the commencement of negotiations and conclusion of such a treaty. No first use of nuclear weapons and ban on their use, ratification of the CTBT, ending the development, replacement and modernization of nuclear arsenals, and reduction of nuclear armament are also all important. These measures will become more effective, if the movement and public opinion demanding an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear weapons are mobilized.

The nuclear weapon-free zones are playing an important role for regional peace and security, and their further development is called for. As agreed upon by the past NPT Review Conferences, an international conference for the creation of a nuclear weapon and WMD-free zone in the Middle East should be convened with no further delay. The problem of nuclear development of North Korea should be resolved through diplomacy, including the resumption of the six party talks.

To achieve a “world without nuclear weapons”, it is essential to resolve regional conflicts and contentious problems by peaceful means based on the peace principles of the U.N. Charter and international law, excluding the use or threat to use force. International community in unity must isolate and root out terrorism, which resorts to indiscriminate killing, by non-military means. For the purpose of preventing proliferation, it is all the more urgent to reach an agreement to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons.

Releasing greater resources by drastic cuts in military expenditures, including the cost for maintenance and development of nuclear forces, overcoming poverty and disparity, improvement of living standard and welfare, and protection of human rights and democracy are all integral parts of “a peaceful and just world”.

Although the Japanese Government is expected to play an appropriate role as the only A-bombed country, it is actually acting as a spokesperson for nuclear powers. At home, it forced through the security-related laws, or War Laws, disregarding the constitutional principles of peace, to consolidate its readiness to take part in war overseas. Relying on the US “nuclear deterrence”, it is even taking the

position of agreeing to the use of nuclear weapons. Underlying this is the absolute priority given to the Japan-US military alliance.

In the meantime, a wide range of people have risen in action demanding the abolition of War Laws and restoration of constitutionalism. Against this background, all opposition parties came together to field their united candidates in the House of Councilors elections in July. In Okinawa, a united candidate who opposes the construction of a new US base defeated a former Cabinet member. The Japanese anti-nuclear peace movement took active part in this struggle. The International Meeting of the 2016 World Conference against A and H Bombs expresses solidarity with the Japanese movement which stands in defense of the Constitution and works to establish a non-nuclear and peaceful Japan.

The movements and public opinion of the peoples of the world are the driving force to open a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just future. We propose the following actions:

-- To build the "International Signature Campaign in Support of the Appeal of the Hibakusha, the Atomic Bomb Survivors of Hiroshima & Nagasaki, for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons" and other actions to build public opinion demanding the start of negotiations for a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons, with the goal of hundreds of millions signatures collected worldwide. To help to promote these actions, we will continue to make widely known the damage of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and help Hibakusha to speak about their experiences internationally. We will carry out these activities particularly on such occasions as the nuclear disarmament deliberations of the UN General Assembly, UN International day for Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons (Sept. 26) and UN Disarmament Week (Oct. 24-30).

-- Let us extend relief and solidarity with the Hibakusha and support them to achieve their demand for state compensation. Let us call for the relief of the victims of the nuclear tests and nuclear plant accidents. Let us strengthen our support of the sufferers of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. We strengthen our solidarity with the zero NPP movement. Let us extend our support to the victims of Agent Orange and depleted uranium, and other war victims.

-- Let us strengthen our solidarity with all such movements against war and for peace, reduction and dismantling of foreign military bases from Okinawa, Guam and other places, effective control of arms exports and military industry, cuts in military expenditures, improvement of living conditions, employment and social welfare, overcoming poverty and disparity, prevention of climate change, protection of global environment, elimination of sexism and other discriminations, overcoming social justice and for sustainable development.

The Hibakusha appeal: "It is our strong desire to achieve a nuclear weapon-free world in our lifetime, so that succeeding generations of people will not see hell on earth ever again." Responding to their pressing desire, with fresh determination, let us make many steps forward to a "nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world".

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International Meeting, 2016 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs