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2025 World Conference against A and H Bombs

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Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before you.

In 2017, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) was adopted by the support of 122 countries. Four years later, it entered into force and became international law.

Those of us who are aware of humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons have been calling for their abolition since the foundation of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) in 1956. The Hibakusha were very happy to see the realization of this treaty and celebrated it as a step forward toward the abolition of nuclear weapons.

However, in 2022 Russia's aggression against Ukraine started; the fighting between Israel and Hamas began the following year; the fighting between Israel and Iran also occurred, and most recently US attacked on Iran's nuclear facilities. There is no end in sight for any of the conflicts.

The North-South division of the Korean Peninsula is exacerbating while North Korea has been repeating missile development tests and has sent soldiers to help Russia. In this international context, the "nuclear taboo" not to use nuclear weapons is shaking more and more. We are living in a very dangerous world today.

I am a survivor of Hiroshima. I was 9 months old when I was exposed to the bomb at 2.5 km from the hypocenter. I was then carried by my 15-year-old sister on her back.

According to my sister, we were both trapped under the collapsed debris; and someone whom we did not know rescued me out; I was covered with blood all over the body. He put me upside down in the firewater to make me spit out debris from my mouth, slapped me on the cheek, shook me, and continued to take care of me until I came to myself and cried.

The atomic bomb exploded with a flash (Pika) and a detonation (Don). It released intense heat that reached 5,000 degrees above the atomic cloud and the blast instantly turned the city into a city of death or a hell.

Piles of redly burnt swollen bodies, dead bodies with eyeballs and internal organs popping out, charred trains full of dead bodies inside, people trapped under collapsed houses and burned alive, processions of ghost like people with their hair standing on end and their burned and peeled skin hanging from arms and hands.

It was a gruesome sight that could hardly be seen as something that happened in the real world. People were all helpless, unable to take care of their children or parents or to give water to help the dying.

I had doubt that there was such a brave and kind person enough to rescue me in the chaos. Keeping such a question in my mind, I had continued to tell my experience of the A-bombing.

After my sister's death in November 2023, we found two memoirs she left: the first one stated that she was saved by "a man" and the second one stated that she was saved by her father.

The 15-year-old sister must have been so confused that she could not recognize the man as her father. Perhaps he must have looked so different from the gentle father she had used to see. Two years after the bombing, he passed away.

Now I am 80 years old. In the year marking the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings, I newly swear to myself. Fortunately, during eighty years after the war, Japan has not fought any war. And I am "alive."

I have to fulfill my mission to oppose war and to strive for the abolition of nuclear weapons for my father who saved me at the risk of his own life and my eight brothers and sisters who were killed by the A-bombing.

The Nobel Peace Prize 2024 was awarded to Nihon Hidankyo. It was awarded to the Hibakusha's unyielding tireless effort to seek for the elimination of nuclear weapons and it was referred to a beacon of hope that the world needed most at this time.

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II and the atomic bombings.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, adopted by the UN in 2017 and ratified by 50 countries, entered into force in 2021 becoming an international law. However, even eight years since then, the government of Japan to have suffered from the A-bombing, is still opposed to the treaty and has taken no action to join it. In March this year, Japan did not even attend the third meeting of state parties to the TPNW as

an observer. In fact, it flatly refused to participate in the meeting, saying that "its participation would send a wrong message to the world as Japan takes a policy to rely on nuclear deterrence". This is a total denial of the wishes of the Hibakusha, who have been calling for "no more Hibakusha" and "a peaceful world without war and nuclear weapons."

At its 70th General Assembly last June, Nihon Hidankyo discussed our two major demands and our movement for the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings, aiming at making Japanese government sign and ratify the TPNW towards the NPT Review Conference and the TPNW Review Conference in 2026.

1. Campaign to have all surviving Hibakusha tell their stories of the atomic bombings and raise awareness about inhumanity of nuclear weapons in and out of Japan to achieve a world without nuclear weapons: We have already drastically increased our testimony activities in Japan, and have received invitations from Spain, France, Belgium, Italy, Mongolia, New Zealand, and other countries.
2. Diverse initiatives to mark the 80th anniversary of the A-bombings, including events, statements, requests to nuclear weapon states, protests against the Japanese government, etc.

Hidankyo's prefectural organizations are already planning a wide variety of events to commemorate the 80th anniversary. Nihon Hidankyo is considering to develop such efforts into a nationwide movement this year.

I have one thing to report to you. On July 23, Nihon Hidankyo, Japan Council against A and H Bombs (Gensuikyo), and Japan Congress Against A and H Bombs (Gensuikin) issued a joint appeal calling for developing a national movement to make the real damage of the atomic bombings known to people in Japan and internationally. We believe that this is of great significance in realizing the wishes of the Hibakusha for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

This year, the number of A-bomb survivors fell below 100,000 to 99,130, and their average age is now 86.13 years old. We have to make the 80th anniversary a year of great progress for Nihon Hidankyo and we want to develop our diverse activities into a national movement so that we can live up to the expectations for the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate.

I would like to work together with all of you who represent the peace movements of the world. Let us do our best together.

Thank you for your kind attention.