

Opening Session, International Meeting
2025 World Conference against A and H bombs

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Organizer's Address

On behalf of the organizers, I would like to heartily welcome and extend greetings of solidarity to all participants in the 2025 World Conference against A and H bombs. This year marks the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombing. We, members of the World Conference Organizing Committee, are working hard to ensure that this conference is both substantively and in scale befitting the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings. Please look forward to it.

I have the pleasure to announce that this conference will be attended by representatives from the United Nations, Austria, Cuba, Egypt, and Mexico, who are at the forefront of efforts to promote the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Peace movement representatives from South Korea, working to achieve the denuclearization and establishment of a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, as well as representatives from the anti-nuclear peace movement in Asia-Pacific, will also participate. From Europe and the U.S.A., representatives from anti-nuclear peace movements, members of parliaments, and dedicated grassroots activists that play a significant role in the forefront of nuclear disarmament are also joining us. From within Japan, participants will include atomic bomb survivors, mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, people involved in the "Nuclear-Free Japan Campaign" (from the 70th anniversary of the Bikini Atoll disaster to the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings—a nationwide campaign for a nuclear-free Japan), those opposing the massive military buildup under Ishiba government, and people leading the movements in areas such as opposition to and removal of U.S. military bases, achieving zero nuclear power generation, solving the climate crisis, and achieving gender equality.

In December last year, the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. Nihon Hidankyo has worked tirelessly both domestically and internationally toward the realization of a world without nuclear

weapons and has consistently highlighted the inhumanity of nuclear weapon use through their members' unique testimony activities. This award recognizes the efforts of Nihon Hidankyo, atomic bomb survivors, and other nuclear victims in working toward the realization of a nuclear weapon-free world. At the same time, the award has greatly encouraged the anti-nuclear peace movement in Japan and around the world working for the elimination of nuclear weapons. We sincerely congratulate Nihon Hidankyo for the acknowledgement by the Nobel Peace Prize and express our deep respects to the organization and the atomic bomb survivors.

In March this year, the average age of A-bomb survivors (hibakusha) reached 86.13, exceeding 86 for the first time. During the past year, the number of A-bomb survivors decreased by 7,695 to 99,130, falling below 100,000 for the first time. Hibakusha are aging rapidly. We cannot but feel with pain the weight of 80 years that have elapsed since the atomic bombing. In order to respond to their wish to "achieve a world without nuclear weapons in their lifetime," we must renew our resolve to make drastic progress in our movement for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) estimates that total global military spending in 2024 amounted to a record \$2.718 trillion. This is a 9.4% increase over the previous year and the largest increase since the end of the Cold War. The main reasons for this significant increase are that, in addition to the parties in the war in Ukraine, all NATO member countries increased their military expenditures in order to strengthen their deterrence capabilities against Russia. And in East Asia, countering China's fast military buildup, neighboring countries also increased their armaments. Japan has also increased its military spending by 21% over the previous year, the largest increase since 1952. Nuclear powers are increasing their arsenals, and modernizing and upgrading their nuclear weapons, just as they did during the Cold War era.

Political leaders should know that the arms buildup is hindering people's lives and employment, hampering the improvement of public services such as health care, welfare, and education. The world would be a much better place if the funds and human resources used

for military research and development were instead allocated to non-military fields.

Friends,.

Four and a half years have passed since the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine by the nuclear superpower Russia. During this period, the Putin regime has repeatedly threatened to use nuclear weapons. The occupation of the Zaporozhye nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine also continues. In the Middle East, Israel continues the destruction and massacre of citizens in the Palestinian Gaza Strip. The United States, another nuclear superpower is defending Israel attacking Gaza.

At the 79th UN General Assembly last autumn, the U.S. and Israel opposed the resolution calling for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and the immediate and unconditional release of hostages, although it was adopted with more than 80% of member states voting in favor. At the UN Security Council meeting in June of this year, the U.S. vetoed and rejected a resolution calling for an immediate, unconditional, and permanent ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and other measures, which was supported by 14 of the 15 members of the Council.

Also in June, Israel bombed Iran's nuclear facilities. The United States, while in the midst of talks over Iran's uranium enrichment activities and other issues, also bombed Iran's nuclear facilities. It is unacceptable for one party to suddenly attack the other when they are in the midst of talks. One cannot but doubt whether the Trump administration had any intention of holding serious talks with Iran in the first place. The attack on Iran, a signatory to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), by the U.S., a nuclear superpower and NPT signatory, and Israel, a non-signatory and nuclear power, constitutes a barbaric act that could shake the foundation of the NPT regime, which is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In July, Israel bombed Syria. At an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council held in response to the bombing, Israel was severely criticized by many council members. In South Asia, India and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed states, had a military confrontation in May.

The current crises occurring in various parts of the world stem from the increasing confrontation and division based on "military-to-military" and "nuclear-to-nuclear" confrontations, ignoring the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, which were born out of reflection on the horrors of the two world wars that inflicted unspeakable suffering on humanity. Confrontation, division, and massive military expansion are destructive to the maintenance of world peace and security. The only way to resolve wars and conflicts and prevent nuclear war is for all governments to strictly adhere to the principles of peaceful resolution of wars and conflicts, prohibition of the threat and use of force, and prohibition and abolition of nuclear weapons, based on the UN Charter and international humanitarian law.

Friends,

According to estimates made by the Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA) of Nagasaki University, the number of nuclear warheads has increased by 120 over the past year, bringing the total number in the world to 12,340. The number of active warheads, which excludes the number of warheads retired or awaiting dismantlement from the total number of nuclear warheads, has increased by 32 and has continued to increase every year since 2018. The Norwegian Nobel Committee, in its statement last October announcing the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Nihon Hidankyo, stressed that nuclear weapons have not been used in war since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, owing to the extraordinary efforts of Nihon Hidankyo and other people calling for nuclear weapons abolition that contributed greatly to establishing a "nuclear taboo." Nuclear weapon states and countries dependent on the nuclear umbrella claim that nuclear weapons were not used in war because nuclear deterrence worked, but it is nothing but a "myth."

Under the current nuclear weapons system, a nuclear explosion or any use of nuclear weapons can occur by accident due to computer malfunction or failure even if there is no intention to engage war. It is possible that a political leader who lacks reason and morality may emerge. The danger of cyber-attacks targeted on the center of the nation and military and nuclear facilities is growing. The only way to eliminate these risks is to abolish nuclear weapons.

As the world faces a serious threat of use of nuclear weapons, the Ishiba government is taking advantage of the war in Ukraine and the crisis in East Asia to increase Japan's reliance

on U.S. nuclear weapons and promote a massive military buildup, including the strengthening of "extended nuclear deterrence". At the Japan-U.S. summit meeting in February this year, the two countries agreed to further strengthen the deterrence and coping capabilities of the Japan-U.S. alliance, and called for the strengthening of the "extended deterrence" that includes U.S. nuclear weapons.

The Ishiba government not only declined to sign the TPNW, which more than 70% of the Japanese people support, but even refused to participate as an observer in the Third Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW held in March. In March, the 50th anniversary of the implementation of the nuclear-free "Kobe Formula," which requires foreign warships entering Kobe Port to submit a non-nuclear certificate, it allowed a U.S. warship to enter Kobe Port without presenting a non-nuclear certificate for the first time. In April, U.S. Air Force B1-B supersonic bombers were deployed at the Misawa Air Base and B52 strategic bombers are repeating joint exercises with Japan's Self Defense Forces. The Japan-U.S. nuclear military alliance is being strengthened. However, the majority of the people demand above all that Japan should "prepare for peace" through diplomacy based on Article 9 of the Constitution, rather than "prepare for war," which would intensify military tensions in East Asia.

The Ishiba government, which became the minority ruling party as a result of the House of Representatives election last October, again lost its majority in the House of Councilors election this past July. The reason for their defeats in the two successive national elections is their failure to act promptly to remedy the current situation when many people are suffering from soaring prices. They have instead continued to pursue a policy that is in line with the US demands, pushing for a massive military buildup, forcing the construction of a new US military base in Okinawa Prefecture, and turning their backs on the TPNW. Now that the LDP government has been harshly judged by the people, let us put an end to the LDP politics.

What really drives international politics is not a handful of big powers, but the governments of the majority of countries and grassroots civil society working together. This is evident when one looks at closely the process of birth of the TPNW and the steady progress the treaty has made to become what it is now, ratified by 73 nations and signed by 94 nations. In this 80th

anniversary year of the atomic bombing, we must further mobilize public opinion and movement in countries around the world. Let us restore the order of peace based on the UN Charter and international humanitarian law. Let us develop solidarity and cooperation on a global scale to realize a peaceful and sustainable world by re-allocating military expenditures to improving the well-being of the people.

On July 23, Nihon Hidankyo, Gensuikyo (Japan Council against A and H Bombs) and Gensuikin (Japan Congress against A- and H-Bombs) issued a joint appeal for the first time, calling for a nationwide efforts for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We heartily welcome this appeal. In response to the appeal, working together beyond the differences of thoughts and political positions, let us promote and carry out the movement to let known the damage and effects of the A-bomb tragedy all over the country.

Finally, I would like to declare the start of the "Peace Wave" action called for worldwide by the Organizing Committee of the 2025 World Conference. It is a grassroots international joint action that takes place from August 3 to 9, starting from Hiroshima and Nagasaki and going around the globe, carrying on as the common goal the elimination of nuclear weapons. In Japan, a wide variety of actions are planned throughout the country, including A-bomb and Bikini nuclear testing photo exhibitions, exhibitions of A-bomb drawings and paintings by high school students, signature drives and street actions, gatherings to listen to the testimonies of A-bomb survivors, etc. Let's expand big the "Peace Wave" to cover the planet with the calls "Do not use nuclear weapons" and "Abolish nuclear weapons".

I would like to close by wishing that the World Conference that begins today, will be an epoch-making success as a forum that generates a major cooperation and concrete strategies to promote the momentum towards nuclear abolition, and to press the Japanese government to participate in the TPNW and to conduct peace diplomacy based on the Constitution.

Thank you.