

2019 World Conference against A & H Bombs – Nagasaki

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Let us work in civil society solidarity between South Korea and Japan to create a peaceful and gender equal world free of nuclear weapons

Greetings of solidarity to all participants in the 2019 World Conference against A & H Bombs - Nagasaki.

The Women's Association is the umbrella organization of South Korean women's organizations making efforts to achieve sustainable values of gender equality. Founded in 1987, the association has seven regional chapters involving 28 member organizations. Its activities cover a wide range of issues, including peace, violence against women, labor, prostitution, welfare, and family. This year, we are continuing with the #MeToo movement which we began last year. We have won a Constitutional Court ruling that criminalizing abortion is unconstitutional. As we prepare for the 25th anniversary in 2020 of the Beijing Platform for Action, we are examining how it is being implemented at home and internationally. We are also working to increase women's representation in parliament in the 21st general election next year.

Unity and peace are areas which our association has focused on since its founding. In the early 1990s, we held a discussion on "Peace in Asia and the Women's Role" in Pyongyang, Tokyo, and Seoul. Since then, we have continued to offer women's inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation and extend humanitarian assistance through a wide variety of solidarity actions. And, in exploring a new form of peace movement through international solidarity, the association has been continuing various activities such as the Northeast Asia Womens Peace Conference, the Women's Peace March, the exploration of discussions on feminism and peace through the women's peace task force, inter-Korean exchanges and cooperation.

I am very happy to be here for the World Conference and meet peace activists from around the world, who are working to achieve a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world. I want to thank our friends from the Women's Peace Fund and the New Japan Women's Association for inviting us to participate in the World Conference. My thanks also go to the Organizing Committee of the World Conference against A and H Bombs for making every effort to hold the World Conference. We are always encouraged by and respect as co-workers for peace the Japanese civic organizations and activists, who are fighting hard to send Hibakusha's testimonies throughout the world and defend Japan's pacifist constitution. Today, mutual trust and solidarity between South Korean and Japanese civic societies are needed more than ever for the defense of peace in South Korea and Japan.

The 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang was followed by a series of inter-Korean summits and US-North Korean summits, which made us hopeful about peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Although the peace process remains very slow, we believe that it is possible for South and North Korea to achieve denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula if they continue persevering with discussions to reach agreement and make efforts to understand each other and to build confidence. Building peace on the Korean Peninsula can only be achieved with the

cooperation of surrounding nations – Japan, the United States, China and Russia. There can be no denuclearization or peace in Northeast Asia without peace on the Korean Peninsula. I ask Japanese civil society to work with us to end the war on the Korean Peninsula and build a peace system.

Japan has responded to a South Korean Supreme Court ruling in a lawsuit over forced labor mobilization of Koreans under Japanese colonial rule by strengthening export controls on South Korea. This, along with the Abe government's pursuit of amending Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, has led to a rapid deterioration of South Korea-Japan ties, seriously threatening peace in Northeast Asia. The Abe government says Japan has made a good effort to resolve the historical issues. But any government-to-government agreement that deceives the victims or lacks real expression of remorse or apology cannot be taken as a true agreement. The Japanese government should make efforts to arrive at a real settlement of the historical issues by offering a sincere apology to the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery and the forced labor mobilization victims and by admitting responsibility for those acts based on international law. Retaliation and intimidation cannot help to resolve the issue. South Korean civil society wants to see our two countries cooperate for peace. South Korea and Japan should go forward together for peace.

War must not be repeated. Nuclear weapons must not be used anywhere on earth. We should learn from history so that the errors of the past are not repeated. We are gathering in this atomic-bombed city to keep the terrible consequences of war in our memory and make them known to the world in order to eliminate nuclear weapons and war.

South Korean and Japanese women's organizations have been good partners on the path toward peace in Northeast Asia and democratization. The New Japan Women's Association (Shinfujin) has been in solidarity with South Korean women's organizations. Since its founding, it opposed the Treaty on the Basic Relations between Japan and the Republic of Korea, which was signed in 1965. Calling for the resolution of the issue of Japanese military sexual slavery, Shinfujin members in Hiroshima and elsewhere in Japan hold Wednesday rallies in solidarity with our efforts. Women from South Korea, Japan, China, Russia, and the United States met four times for the Northeast Asia Womens Peace Conference from 2008 through 2012 to help build peace in Northeast Asia. Last May, women's organizations, peace organizations and civic organizations from South Korea and Japan met in Seoul to discuss ways to achieve peace on the Korean Peninsula and Japan, as well as in Northeast Asia and the rest of the world. Let us build gender-free peace through our solidarity.

The peace process for the Korean Peninsula, the peace building efforts for Northeast Asia, and nuclear-free peace in Japan are inter-related issues. I would like to call on Japanese and South Korean civil societies to work actively in solidarity for peace in Northeast Asia and the rest of the world. Let us affirm the history that has for decades been built by Japan and South Korea for a future of peace and cooperation in order to help bring about peace in Northeast Asia. Our future must not be threatened by the inability to settle what happened in the past. Now is the time for the civic power of our two countries to re-establish bilateral relations based on a correct understanding of history and mutual trust.

Thank you for your attention.