

OPENING SPEECH IN THE MEETING OF GENSUIKYO -VAVA ON VIETNAMESE VICTIMS OF ORANGE ORANGE

*Lieutenant General Nguyen Van Rinh, President of The Vietnam
Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA)
Ho Chi Minh City, August 3, 2020*

*Dear Mr. Hiroshi Taka, Representative Director of GENSUIKYO,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Today, I am very honored and happy to attend the special meeting organized by GENSUIKYO as part of the memorial activities for the victims of the atomic bombs to express the solidarity of the Japanese people with the victims of Agent Orange and the people of Vietnam, thereby strengthening coordination between our two organizations and the peoples of both countries in the fight against war, for a peaceful world without weapons of mass destruction. First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Taka, thank the leadership board of The Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs for organizing this important event and for allowing me to speak at the opening of this conference!

Ladies and gentlemen,

For many years, the first days of August have become unforgettable days for the peoples of our two countries. Especially this year, as the Japanese people hold memorial activities for more than 200,000 people died from the atomic bombs exactly 75 years ago, it is also the time when Vietnamese think of millions of victims of toxic chemicals used in the war, moving forward to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Agent Orange disaster in Vietnam (August 10, 1961 - August 10, 2021).

As you know, 59 years ago, on August 10, 1961, the US military carried out the first spraying of toxic chemicals in Vietnam, opening the US chemical warfare in Vietnam. It is the biggest, longest and most disastrous chemical warfare in history. In 10 years, from 1961 to 1971, the US military dumped around 80 million liters of chemical toxins into southern Vietnam, 61% of which were Agent Orange, containing around 366 kg of dioxin, which was the most powerful poison known to everyone.

The chemical warfare carried out by the American army had very serious consequences for the Vietnamese people: more than 3 million hectares of forest were destroyed; Thousands of villages have to live with water resources and food resources poisoned. 4.8 million people have been exposed to toxic chemicals, of

which hundreds of thousands have died; the survivors live with the pain of the disease every day. Many women do not have the right to motherhood; Many newborns died or were deformed. The diseases and disabilities linked to Agent Orange have been transmitted to the 3rd generation ...

The American chemical warfare in Vietnam not only caused serious damage to people and the environment of Vietnam, but also affected the lives and health of American soldiers and soldiers of other countries participating in the war with the United States military, and in the same times affect the environment where toxic chemicals are stored and hidden before or after their use in Vietnam, including Okinawa of Japan.

Dear friends, Agent Orange and atomic bombs are weapons of mass destruction. The use of these weapons during the war had serious and lasting consequences for the peoples of Vietnam and Japan. In the process of overcoming these consequences, the peoples of our two countries came together and were so supportive of each other, showing the deep and long-standing affection between the two peoples. The people and the Government of Japan provided the Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange with dedicated and effective support and assistance. At this forum, allow me to represent over 3 million Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange to express our gratitude to our friends and the Japanese people for their precious help.

Through this conference, I hope also that our two organizations, Gensuikyo and VAVA, will understand each other better, better understand the consequences of nuclear and chemical weapons for the populations of the two countries, so that together the peoples of the two countries and the peoples of the whole world will further strengthen their solidarity and coordinate in the struggle to stop the production, stockpiling and use of weapons of mass destruction and to end the war; to have no more victims of Agent Orange, no more victims of nuclear weapons; to build a world of peace in which peoples unite, cooperate together for the well-being of peoples and social progress!

Wishing our Conference successful!
Thanks everyone!