

2020 World Conference against A & H Bombs – Nagasaki Day

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Co-Chair, Nagasaki Promotion Committee of the International Hibakusha Appeal Signature Campaign

Dear friends,

Thank you very much to all of you who are participating in the online 2020 World Conference against A & H Bombs for your hard work. I'm TANAKA Shigemitsu, Co-Chair of the Nagasaki Promotion Committee of the International Hibakusha Appeal Signature Campaign. In April 2016, the Hibakusha of the United States, Brazil and Japan gathered their last bit of strength to launch an international signature campaign calling for support for the appeal for the conclusion of a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons.

In Nagasaki, with a resolve to fulfill our responsibility as an A-bombed prefecture in this signature campaign, five Hibakusha organizations took the initiative and held press conference inviting various groups working for peace in Nagasaki to gather together. Around that time, then US President Obama was going to visit Hiroshima, so we seized that opportunity to initiate the prefecture-wide signature campaign and on May 27 we held a kick-off event in Peace Park.

Indeed, more than 100 people took part in the event to start the signature campaign. On September 26, we inaugurated the Nagasaki Promotion Committee of the International Hibakusha Appeal Signature Campaign. We set the 26th of the month as the joint action day and have since carried out the monthly signature drive from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. in front of a shopping mall called HAMACROSS. Every member organization set a target of how many signatures they would collect and, as the Promotion Committee, we decided to gather signatures from 500,000 people, about a half of the population of Nagasaki.

In July, 2017 something we had never imagined happened. The United Nations adopted the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons with 122 countries voting in favor of the treaty. Rejoicing from our hearts over the treaty's adoption, we gathered at the Nagasaki Epicenter Park and Ms. YOKOYAMA Teruko, vice chair of the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Survivors Council, reported to the deceased Hibakusha that such a treaty had come into being. We then felt the need to learn as we carried out the signature campaign, so we held study sessions with different lecturers once every four months.

In the four years since we started the campaign in Nagasaki, we have collected nearly 485,000 signatures compared to our goal of 500,000. We have 15,000 more to achieve the goal in a month and a half before the campaign finishes. We are heading into a crucial stretch to reach the goal.

We are resolved to make our effort a success by calling once again on different groups for their cooperation.

We Hibakusha will always stand with you. Together, let us do our utmost.