

**2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs
International Meeting**

Address of the Organizer

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against A & H Bombs**

Welcome to the 2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs to mark 76 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. On behalf of the Organizing Committee, I would like to heartily welcome you and extend greetings of solidarity. This is the first World Conference since the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The overall theme this year is: “With the Hibakusha, let us achieve a nuclear weapon-free, peaceful and just world – for the future of humankind and our planet.”

I am honored and pleased to note that this World Conference is attended by government representatives from Austria, Malaysia, and Mexico, countries which are making strenuous efforts at the forefront of the movement to promote the TPNW. The representative of Austria himself will chair the first Meeting of State Parties to the TPNW in Vienna in January next year. Malaysia has also been designated to preside over a committee that will discuss nuclear disarmament issues at the 10th Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, to be held sometime next year.

Peace movement representatives from South Korea and other countries in Asia and the Pacific region are also participating in our Conference. They are working hard to build a nuclear-free peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and in East Asia. International participants also include dedicated grassroots activists and peace movement representatives who are playing a great role in other parts of the world, including Europe and North and South America.

From Japan, we have Hibakusha, the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, those involved in the signature campaign to urge the Japanese government to sign and ratify the TPNW, and those opposing the adverse revision of Article 9 of the

Constitution. We also have people who are working on different fronts: the fight to end nuclear power generation, the promotion of renewable energy, and the fight for removal of the US military bases in Japan, and the struggle for gender equality. Victims of the great earthquake and tsunami in March 2011 and the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant are also here.

In their testimonies, Hibakusha indict nuclear weapons on the grounds that they are inhumane. I would like to express my respects to the Hibakusha for their activities over these years, knowing that their average age is almost 84. Please take good care of yourselves.

This year as last year, our World Conference is held online and live, due to the lingering COVID-19 pandemic. It's really unfortunate that we cannot meet face to face with representatives from governments and civil societies of various countries. However, the online conference has the merit of allowing broader participation of people in Japan and around the world. We are also planning to hold some local events both online and in person in Hiroshima and Nagasaki entitled "Solidarity with the Hibakusha – 2021."

In January 22 this year, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) entered into force, setting an international norm to outlaw nuclear weapons. It marked the beginning of a new era in which nuclear weapons are illegal in all aspects—not only their use, but also the threat to use, as well as development, testing, production and transfer of such weapons. Humankind has made a great step forward toward a world without nuclear weapons. Embracing the Hibakusha's desire to see nuclear weapons eliminated while they are alive, we have worked with the Hibakusha to let people know in Japan and around the world about the damage and after-effects of the atomic bombings. This effort led to the entry into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.

There still exist 13,000 nuclear warheads in the world, 2,000 of them being on high alert and ready to launch within minutes to strike an enemy. Over the last 76 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have never been used only because fortune sided with our Movement against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs. In the highly computerized nuclear weapon systems, unintended nuclear explosion or nuclear war could be triggered due to computer miscalculation even in the absence of an intention to fight a war. The danger of cyber terrorism is also increasing.

The United States, Russia, and other countries possessing nuclear weapons continue to follow security policies that rely on nuclear deterrence. Despite the coronavirus pandemic, they set out to modernize their nuclear arsenals and even promote the development of smaller tactical nuclear weapons. Clinging to nuclear weapons only leads to more nuclear proliferation and causes confrontation. Scientists have for many years warned that climate change could occur if low-yield nuclear weapons are used, causing global hunger and threatening the very survival of humankind. We can no longer count on fortune to secure the safety of humankind.

More than 4.2 million people in the world have died from COVID-19. Infections are spreading fast, particularly among the poor and other socially disadvantaged people, such as migrants, refugees, and indigenous populations. Environmental destruction, economic inequalities, cutbacks on social services, including health care, welfare and education, testify to the failure of neoliberal economic and social policies. World military expenditures in 2020 are estimated at 1 trillion 981 billion dollars or about 214 trillion yen. Military buildup is totally ineffective for the prevention of COVID-19. Military expenditure, including money for developing new nuclear weapons, is impeding the improvement of people's livelihoods, employment, and social services. If human resources used for military research and development were redirected to non-military areas, our livelihoods would be much improved.

With the TPNW in force, this year's World Conference will be a place to help develop new common action by the United Nations, government and civil society in each country to build up international opinion urging the nuclear weapons possessing countries and the countries relying on nuclear weapons to implement the agreements that have been reached so far, including the unequivocal undertaking to achieve the complete elimination of their nuclear arsenals conducive to nuclear disarmament. These are undertakings which they accepted as their nuclear disarmament obligation under the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

As demonstrated by the entry into force of the TPNW, international politics is moved by governments and grassroots civil society in many countries, not by a handful of great powers. It is important to heighten the level of people's opinion and strengthen the movements in each country. Let us greatly develop global solidarity and cooperation to contain the COVID-19 pandemic as soon as possible and realize a peaceful, just, and sustainable world. Now that the TPNW has entered into force, let

us exert our power through cooperation between the United Nations, national governments and grassroots civil society. Let us increase our efforts to inform people and pass down the knowledge about the damage and after-effects of the atomic bombings. Let us make known the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons and let us urge the nuclear weapons possessing countries and the countries that rely on nuclear weapons to change their security policies.

I conclude the Organizing Committee report by expressing hope that the World Conference starting today will be an epoch-making forum to help grow the movement toward a total ban on nuclear weapons and their abolition, to help realize a peace system without nuclear weapons in the Korean Peninsula, to rally the power of Japan's anti-nuclear peace movement, and to develop concrete plans in this direction.

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