



UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs – August 4-9 2023

Message from President Michael D. Higgins

It is an honour to have this opportunity once again to express my support for the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs.

It has been 78 years since the world witnessed the catastrophic atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The lived experience of the *hibakusha* continues to contribute in the most impactful way to the efforts to rid our world of nuclear weapons. Their stories have been essential in ensuring the reasons for disarmament remain clear, powerfully forming part of our collective and cultural memory. As a global community we must continue to work to ensure the horrors inflicted upon the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are never repeated. The pursuit of global peace and security remains an imperative that unites us all.

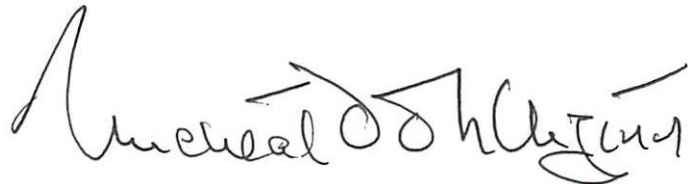
Through their testimony, the *hibakusha* have bravely illuminated the long-term and inter-generational consequences of nuclear weapons use. We will never be equipped to manage the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of a nuclear war. Our sole choice is to cooperate as a global community as a matter of urgency until we have eliminated this risk. The only guarantee of non-use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination.

We are living in a time of heightened nuclear risk and dangerous nuclear rhetoric. We continue to observe repeated nuclear threats by the Russian Federation as part of its illegal invasion and war of aggression in Ukraine. This is unacceptable. Any use of nuclear weapons would result in devastating humanitarian consequences with a global impact.

In Hiroshima this year, G7 leaders referenced the need to take concrete steps towards the ultimate goal of a world without nuclear weapons. It is vital to see this commitment now translate into concrete action. It is more important than ever to reaffirm our commitment to find solutions to the challenges of nuclear disarmament. Ireland will continue to bring a level of ambition to bear across disarmament processes, including the first Preparatory Committee currently underway in Vienna for the Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the second Meeting of States Parties of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons later this year.

This work is more important now than ever. This World Conference and the example of the *hibakusha* underscores the importance of recommitting to our collective endeavour of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Our collective efforts today will shape a safer and more harmonious world for generations to come.

May I wish the World Conference every success in your vital and indispensable work.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael D. Higgins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M' and a distinctive flourish at the end.

MICHAEL D. HIGGINS
UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN
PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Vientiane, 03 August 2023

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Government and people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I would like to extend my warmest greetings and sincere congratulations to the Organizing Committee and all participants attending the 2023 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs to be held on 04-09 August 2023 in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan.

I am delighted with the successful outcome of the First Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2022, through the adoption of the Vienna Declaration, which reaffirms the state parties' determination to realize the complete elimination of nuclear weapons and to chart their path forward for the effective implementation of the Treaty, along with the adoption of the Vienna Action Plan for taking forward the mission of the treaty and realizing the commitments made in the Declaration.

I firmly believe that following the successful adoption of the Hiroshima Declaration with the aim of nuclear weapon-free world, the World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs in 2023 will continue to serve as an important forum for all participants to engage in a frank and constructive exchange of views in promoting the international community's efforts and commitments to address this issue in parallel with enhancing diplomatic consultations and negotiations in order to address currently tense international conflicts through peaceful means.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Lao People's Democratic Republic, I wish the 2023 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs a great success.

Thongloun SISOULITH

His Excellency Hiroshi TAKA
Co-Chair, the Steering Committee
The 2023 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs
Tokyo

Unofficial translation

**PRESIDENT
THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM**

Hanoi, 24th July, 2023

**To: World Conference
Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2023**

MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY

I am very happy to convey my congratulations to the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs 2023, to be organized by the Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan, on August 04-09, 2023, a manifestation of the determination and relentless efforts of the world peace movement to eliminate nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the State and People of Viet Nam and in my own name, I avail myself of this opportunity to express solidarity with and support for victims of atomic bombs, victims of Agent Orange and all other war victims.

Over the past years, with the unremitting efforts of peace-loving people throughout the world, including the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs, the struggle against nuclear weapons has gained many important achievements, notably the adoption of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1968, the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017 and TPNW's entry into force in 2021. We are honoured to have contributed our part in these efforts. Viet Nam is proud to be a member of most international treaties on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and one of the first countries to have signed and ratified the TPNW Treaty.

At present, the world is still faced with numerous complicated, unpredictable developments. The conflict in Ukraine, with no end in sight, big-power competition, populism, political upheavals in many countries and territories, tensions in hot spots such as the East Sea or the Korean peninsula...are making us increasingly concerned about the ever heavier risk of using nuclear weapons.

In this context, I do hope that this year's World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs will contribute to raising a remarkable voice, calling for nations to join hands in building a peaceful world on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, abidance by principles of international law, particularly the United Nations Charter and the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and mutually beneficial cooperation with sincerity, trust and responsibility.

The State and People of Viet Nam will continue standing side by side with peace movements and peace-loving people of Japan and the world, including the Japan Council Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs. We strongly believe that together we will generate a future of peace, stability, cooperation and shared prosperity for the region and the world.

On this occasion, I express my sincere thanks to peace organizations and movements and the people of Japan and the world for having supported Viet Nam in its struggle for national independence and reunification in the past, as well as its efforts in national construction and defense at present.

I would like to convey my warmest solidarity greetings and best wishes to the population of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as well as all the people of Japan.

May I wish all participants in the Conference good health, peacefulness and happiness.

May the conference be a great success./.

VO VAN THUONG

**Message of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
To the 2023 World Conference against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs**

August 2023

I extend my deep appreciation and heartfelt gratitude to the Japan Council against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs (Gensuikyo) for its long-standing efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and the humanitarian imperative of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Today, the risk of the use of nuclear weapons – the most devastating and inhumane type of weapon ever created - is highest since the worst moments of the Cold War. Almost 13,000 nuclear weapons are in the arsenals of the nuclear-armed states, many with much more destructive power than the Hiroshima bomb and ready to be launched within minutes. Heightened political tensions, arsenal expansion and modernization, blurring of the boundaries between conventional and nuclear weapon capabilities in contemporary military doctrines, and technological advances in the field of cyber warfare and artificial intelligence all increase the probability that nuclear weapons may be used – deliberately or accidentally. It is a probability we cannot afford to accept.

In 1945 the ICRC, together with the Japanese Red Cross Society, witnessed first-hand the suffering and devastation brought upon the women, men, boys and girls of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the atomic bombs.

As we tried, in near-impossible conditions, to assist the countless dying and injured, we realized there can be no effective humanitarian response to the catastrophic and indiscriminate consequences of nuclear weapons.

Any use of nuclear weapons, including a so-called “tactical” or “low yield” nuclear weapon, would have catastrophic effects on human health, the environment, the climate, food production, and socio-economic development around the globe. No government or international organization is prepared to deal with such a situation.

In light of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons, in the ICRC’s view, it is extremely doubtful that nuclear weapons could ever be used in accordance with the rules and principles of international humanitarian law. Moreover, any use of nuclear weapons would be abhorrent to the principles of humanity and the dictates of public conscience.

The only effective mitigation of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences that any use of nuclear weapons would cause is the prevention of their use altogether. And the only way to ensure that nuclear weapons are never used again is to eliminate them.

The landmark Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a crucial development in this respect. By comprehensively prohibiting nuclear weapons under international law, it fills an important legal gap. Equally importantly, it paves the way for nuclear-armed states to destroy their nuclear weapons and dismantle their nuclear weapon programmes before or after joining the treaty. It thus provides a roadmap towards nuclear disarmament.

Lastly, it seeks to redress some of the unspeakable harm caused by past use and testing of nuclear weapons, by obliging States to take measures and cooperate to assist victims and remediate the contaminated natural environment. Today, with over 65 states parties to TPNW, making this treaty universal is more important than ever.

The TPNW brings us one step closer to a nuclear-weapon-free world, although the road ahead is still long. Pending the elimination of nuclear weapons, drastic measures to reduce the risk that they may be used are urgently needed.

We call on all states to:

- Sign and ratify the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.
- Condemn all threats to use nuclear weapons, implicit or explicit, regardless of circumstances.
- Take immediate and concrete steps to reduce the risk of nuclear weapons being used, by taking nuclear weapons off high alert, committing to no-first-use policies, and de-prioritizing nuclear weapons in military doctrines and security policies.
- Fully implement the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and commitments made at its review conferences, including achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons pursuant to their obligations under international law.
- Take robust measures to assist those affected by nuclear weapons use or testing and to decontaminate the impacted natural environment.

Ensuring that nuclear weapons are never used again is crucial. We owe this to the Hibakusha, their descendants, and communities all over the globe.

I wish you every success for this conference and for your future work.

Mirjana Spoljaric
President
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)