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On the occasion of the 2021 World Conference against A and H Bombs, I would like to extend my message.

On August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb took so many precious lives and completely destroyed the city of Hiroshima. Having experienced the devastation caused by the atomic bombing, Hiroshima continues to call for a peaceful world without nuclear weapons based on the Hibakusha's sincere wish that "no one else should have to suffer such an experience".

However, turning to the situation of nuclear weapons, more than 13,000 nuclear warheads still exist in the world. Instead of fulfilling their obligation to pursue negotiations on nuclear disarmament in good faith, as mandated by Article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), nuclear weapon states are developing and modernizing their nuclear arsenals.

As the world faces the new threat of COVID-19, we are finding that we can respond to this threat by working together in "solidarity". In light of this experience, I believe that we can overcome nuclear weapons, a common threat to humanity, if people of the world continue to stand in solidarity under a shared idea. As the number of people who can talk from personal experience about the tragedy of nuclear weapons decreases, it is important to ensure that the desire for peace is passed on to younger generations, to make the absence of war and nuclear weapons a common value of civil society, and to work to achieve an eternal world peace.

Both the NPT, which entered into force in 1970, and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which entered into force in January 2021, are indispensable for the abolition of nuclear weapons. Future generations should continue to maintain the framework formed by these treaties. However, the trends have been uncertain. In order for the world's leaders to confirm their determination to effectively operate this framework, it is increasingly necessary to build a major trend for peace by fostering awareness of peace in civil society, generating international public opinion for the abolition of nuclear weapons, and

encouraging politicians of each country to change their policies. In that sense, this year's holding of the World Conference against A & H Bombs is highly meaningful, as a forum where you disseminate your appeal for achieving a peaceful world without nuclear weapons, both inside and outside Japan. I would like to express my deep respect for your efforts.

The City of Hiroshima, together with more than 8,000 member cities of Mayors for Peace in 165 nations and regions, will do its utmost to create an environment that supports leaders taking actions for the abolition of nuclear weapons. I sincerely hope that you will continue to work for the abolition of nuclear weapons, which are "absolute evil," and for the realization of an eternal world peace.

In closing, I wish the conference great success, and everyone the best of health and good luck with your activities.