

2023 World Conference against A and H Bombs – Nagasaki
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Good morning. My name is Margaret Engel and I am the Student and Campaigns Coordinator for Peace Action New York State, an affiliate of Peace Action, the largest grassroots peace network in the United States. It is truly an honor to be speaking here today at the Nagasaki Day Rally. I would like to extend my gratitude towards the Nagasaki Organizing Committee and Gensuikyo for organizing such an important event.

The World Conference Against A and H Bombs has been so thought-provoking and powerful as a young organizer. Listening to the actions taking place in Japan and around the world towards a nuclear-free future has left me inspired and eager to get back home to New York and get to work with the rest of the Peace Action community.

The U.S. bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused irreparable devastation for millions that are still very much felt today. But today we must listen to the stories the hibakusha tell and listen to their calls for change. We must not reach any closer to midnight on the Doomsday Clock, despite the peril that the global stage faces. We fight for change in the midst of ongoing warfare, ignored and violated international treaties, and an ever-expanding military industrial complex. Together we must demand policies from our government bodies that do not simply reform the dangerous stockpiling activities of nuclear states such as the U.S., but lead us down the path of total nuclear abolition before it is too late.

Peace Action New York State is an organization that operates on the principle of community: We march alongside many organizations at home and abroad who share the same passion for nuclear abolition and demilitarization. In 2017, Peace Action New York State was able to celebrate with community partners the adoption of the Treaty on the

Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which was made possible by the tireless efforts of hibakusha and other dedicated anti-nuclear civil society groups across the world, frustrated by the lack of progress or action from the nuclear-armed states.

We organize actions within coalitions such as the Back from the Brink campaign and the Move the Money NYC campaign, who have made great strides in lobbying for concrete political change and make it clear that our nuclear policies and the money we spend on nuclear weapons and “defense” only make us less safe. We are also proud of our student organizing program, which enables students across the state to establish Peace Action chapters at their universities to promote youth engagement with nuclear disarmament and other anti-war issues.

Despite the United States being a party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, my country continues to pour money into nuclear weapons research and stockpiling. This year, the Department of Energy has spent over \$264 billion on plans for a new Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) carrying nuclear warheads. The longstanding myth of nuclear deterrence serving as a valid geopolitical tactic persists in U.S. foreign policy regardless of which party holds executive power, and Peace Action New York State continues to work on debunking this myth.

This summer, Peace Action New York State has been advocating for our Congressional representatives to sponsor H.Res.77. Also called the Back from the Brink resolution, this is a bill that calls on the President to embrace the goals and provisions of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and make nuclear disarmament the centerpiece of U.S. national security policy. It also calls on the United States to lead a global effort to move the world back from the nuclear brink and to prevent nuclear war. With mutual support and the sharing of resources, organizations like Peace Action have continued to organize for change in nuclear policy year after year. We have taken to the streets in Manhattan, Washington, D.C., and across the country demanding action from our government. We lift up the voices of our student organizers and encourage their passion for disarmament. We work together even in the face of uncompromising,

destabilizing nuclear policy in the United States, such as a planned \$1.2 trillion for nuclear weapons over the next thirty years.

The actions that Peace Action New York State has taken is and is still organizing and has helped to bring about change in our communities and in federal policy. But our work is far from over, especially this year in the face of brutal warfare that U.S. nuclear policy perpetuates. The TPNW is a hallmark agreement that has seen tremendous success in reducing the global nuclear arsenal and garnering attention to the issue of disarmament around the world.

Peace Action New York State, as well as several other anti-war advocacy groups, will be at the United Nations Headquarters in NYC this November for the Second Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW. There, we will plan actions inside and outside of the UN to hold our governments accountable and bring awareness to the importance of this treaty. We hope to see many of you there, so that we can collaborate and further build our international community of passionate activists. We are eager to share ideas and listen to the actions you have been taking, as well. Thank you so much for your time.