
United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination

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Statement on the Convening of the U.N. Negotiation Conference on Banning Nuclear Weapons: Now is the Time to Agree on a Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons

Submitted by Japan Council against A and H Bombs

1. We of the movement of the only country in the world to have suffered a nuclear attack warmly welcome the convening of the U.N. negotiation conference for the prohibition of nuclear weapons, and want to contribute to its success as a member of civil society.
2. The consequence of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 teaches us that humans and nuclear weapons cannot coexist. The two bombs instantly ruined the two cities and took lives of some 140,000 and 70,000 people respectively by the end of the year. According to the study of the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo), some 65% of the deaths on those two days were of children, women at ages 10-59 and elderly people. The Hibakusha, who now number some 170,000 and are still tormented by wounds both in mind and body, are looking to the success in this conference, hoping to see nuclear weapons to be abolished even just a day earlier.
3. Founded to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, it is the prime task for the United Nations to eliminate “from national armaments of atomic weapons...”, as provided for by the first resolution of the first session of the U.N. General Assembly.
4. The Japanese people have delivered their desire for the prohibition of atomic and hydrogen bombs to the U.N. and other international bodies, with tens of millions of their signatures. Nevertheless, the number of nuclear weapons continued to increase, countless people suffered from radiation through uranium mining, nuclear testing and other phases of nuclear development, global environment deteriorated, and the human race was brought on the verge of annihilation many times. There still exist about 15,000 nuclear warheads, and nuclear-armed states are pursuing to use or threat to use nuclear weapons, insisting that it is a part of their “security” policy.
5. An overwhelming number of world governments are refusing this development and forming a global trend to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons. As such weapons of mass destruction or of extraordinary atrocity as biological and chemical weapons, anti-personnel mines and cluster bombs were banned and eliminated, nuclear weapons must be banned by a legally binding instrument, and completely eliminated as weapons that are incompatible with the very survival of humanity.

6. The 2010 NPT Review Conference confirmed to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, and agreed that all states make a “special effort” to establish a “framework” to achieve “a world without nuclear weapons”. Yet, it has not been implemented, and the Hibakusha are saying that they cannot wait any longer.

7. It is time to take a bold step toward achieving a treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons. The states possessing nuclear weapons should participate in the process. But even if they do not do so at the initial stage, an agreement reached by the overwhelming majority under the rule of the U.N. Charter can render nuclear weapons illegal, placing political and moral constraint over nuclear powers. This will form a major step to the complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

8. In the process from banning nuclear weapons to the complete elimination of these weapons, the global civil society movements will have a special responsibility. A world without nuclear weapons will be achieved and maintained on the basis of the force of will of the people around the world to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons. To build up and consolidate the strong will of the sovereign people, we will continue to work in support of the effort of the UNO and its member states for achieving a treaty banning nuclear weapons, to make known to the world of the tragic consequences of the atomic bombings through Hibakusha’s testimonies and A-bomb photo panels, to collect millions of more support for the International Hibakusha Appeal Signature Campaign calling for a treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons, and thus strengthening our international cooperation for our common goal.