

PEACE CULTURE 平和文化



No.92 (semiannual)



A Wide Variety of International Peace Exchanges by Younger Generations



Courtesy visit to Honolulu City Hall
(Project to dispatch young people and hibakusha to Honolulu, USA)

High school students learned about local culture and history at Pearl Harbor.
(Project to dispatch young people and hibakusha to Honolulu, USA)



Young people from seven cities in six countries discussed various issues.
(International Youth Conference for Peace in the Future)



Japanese Tea Ceremony by the Ueda-ryu Wafu-do
(International Youth Conference for Peace in the Future)



Mayors for Peace Youths presenting paper cranes to UN Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu
(Second Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference)



Peace studies at Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park
(Project with Daegu Metropolitan City)



Young people from Daegu performed a traditional dance.
(Exchange activities with Daegu Metropolitan City)



Meeting with WTO Director-General Okonjo
(Second Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference)

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Humanitarian Approach towards the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

Izumi Nakamitsu

United Nations Under-Secretary-General of Disarmament Affairs and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

The concept of “humanitarian approaches to nuclear disarmament” has gained considerable traction over the past decade. At the same time, the humanitarian approach has a long history in the field of disarmament, having been part of the foundations of disarmament and arms control agreements since the nineteenth century. The 1868 Saint Petersburg Declaration on explosive projectiles, for instance, referred to the necessity of “alleviating as much as possible the calamities of war.” The Geneva Protocol, which opened for signature in 1925, made reference to a humanitarian imperative when it called for the banning of chemical and biological weapons on the ground that they had been “justly condemned by the general opinion of the civilized world.”

More recently, the international community agreed on a Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (which, for a time, was colloquially referred to as the “inhumane weapons convention”). The Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention banned certain weapons considered by the international community to be inhumane by their very nature. The extension of this same logic and principle to nuclear weapons, as yet another compelling reason for their elimination, was the next step.

It was just over a decade ago, in 2013, that the first conference on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons took place in Oslo, Norway. Governments, international organizations and civil society came together to discuss and address the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. It was an overdue conversation, but one that had been called for since 1945 – the year nuclear weapons became part of our collective reality.

And yet, also since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, nuclear weapons have been held up, by those who possess them, as the ultimate guarantor of the security of the State. At the same time, it has been clear that they can never be a guarantor of the security of the people – the citizens of those States. To the contrary, no adequate humanitarian response to any nuclear weapon detonation would be possible.

This has been well understood. And yet the primacy of the State in nuclear weapons policy has historically prevailed. Recently, however, there has been important shifts in this paradigm. Instead of a discussion that begins and ends in a State-centric context, humanitarian approaches to nuclear disarmament have placed emphasis on the lived experiences of the survivors of nuclear explosions.

This group includes both the victims of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki – and the stories of the *hibakusha*. It also includes those who have suffered from

the multigenerational impacts of nuclear testing on affected communities and the environment. It is based on meticulous scientific research. In fact, such humanitarian approaches to nuclear disarmament can really be said to begin with the work of the *hibakusha* to tell their stories and raise awareness.

Diplomatic discourse has, as a result, benefited greatly from the inclusion of these considerations. They have made the arguments in favour of nuclear disarmament more compelling, more real, and more personal.

The humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are catastrophic and indiscriminate, contained neither in time nor in space. The effects of a nuclear explosion in a populated area would unleash an unimaginable humanitarian and environmental catastrophe. No State can be adequately prepared to address what the International Committee of the Red Cross described as the “immediate humanitarian emergency nor the long-term consequences of a nuclear weapon detonation in a populated area, nor provide appropriate assistance to those affected.”⁽¹⁾

And such effects would not respect national borders, instead spreading far beyond site of the detonation. As the tragic aftermath of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has shown, those that are exposed to a nuclear explosion but are not immediately killed are likely to suffer from grave, long-term health consequences. It is for these two reasons that nuclear disarmament remains the United Nations’ highest disarmament priority.

It is for that reason, that I have been heartened by the changes in the legal landscape over the past decade, most notably in the form of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which was opened for signature in 2017 and entered into force in 2021. It is the first multilateral treaty to comprehensively ban all nuclear-weapons related activities and was the first new multilateral nuclear disarmament treaty of any sort in over two decades. It also has a clear focus on the victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons. Indeed, it owes its existence to, among others, the dedicated efforts and persistence of the *hibakusha*.

However, it is my firm view that discussions on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons should not be confined to the TPNW’s States Parties and its supporters. Like nuclear weapons themselves, this is an issue that affects all inhabitants of our planet. We all have a stake in pursuing meaningful and workable approaches to international peace and security that integrate human, national and common security – not just State security. Work related to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons are a necessary part of that effort. This is, to say the least, an area of mutual concern, regardless of nationality or treaty-status.

Today, the world is currently facing multiple challenges. Geopolitical tensions are continuing to rise. Distrust has replaced dialogue. As a result, we are again facing a world of acute and daily nuclear risk, fueled by dangerous nuclear rhetoric. The guardrails we have erected – the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime – are under

(1) See www.icrc.org/en/document/humanitarian-impacts-and-risks-use-nuclear-weapons, accessed on 28 October 2024.



severe strain.

With the fast-approaching eightieth anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we have an important opportunity to remind ourselves of the existential risks posed by nuclear weapons. I remain thankful for the courage of the *hibakusha* in keeping the memory of those terrible events alive – courage that was recently recognized in the form of a Nobel Peace Prize. The United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, has pledged to keep the message of the *hibakusha* alive and continue to spread their message: we need nuclear disarmament now.

I recognize that this is not easy to do in times of tensions and insecurities. Yet it is precisely in such times that we should reaffirm our commitment to humanitarian disarmament and that we should amplify global efforts to protect civilians from the effects of nuclear war. In so doing, we should also reaffirm that nuclear war is not a niche disarmament issue or a peace and security issue that is out of our hands. It would have cataclysmic impacts on human lives, on the environment, on sustainable peace and on development. The ever-present threat posed by nuclear weapons casts a shadow over all that we do, and their elimination is therefore in all our interests.

I sincerely hope that Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in cooperation with the United Nations and its agencies, will continue to convey the stark reality of the atomic bombings, clearly demonstrating the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons to people around the world and to civil society.

(October 2024)



The Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in the Road toward 2045

Elayne Whyte-Gomez

Ambassador President of the United Nations negotiations of the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons
Professor of Practice, Johns Hopkins SAIS

Presiding over the United Nations diplomatic conference tasked with negotiating a legal ban on nuclear weapons was one of the greatest honors of my life, both as a diplomat representing Costa Rica and as a global citizen. The conference successfully met this immense responsibility. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, a groundbreaking achievement, was born in 2017, 72 years after the nuclear age began.

This treaty is the result of decades of relentless advocacy by individuals and organizations worldwide. It embodies the tireless efforts of diplomats in negotiating procedural, institutional, conceptual, and political frameworks to shape the narrative and build the political coalition necessary for a legally binding prohibition on nuclear weapons. This achievement stands as a testament to strategic vision, bravery, and political wisdom of political leaders and survivors

of the atomic era. Beyond its historical and institutional significance, this conference was a transformative experience for all participants, one that will continue to shape our lives forever.

The most profound achievement occurred on July 7th, 2017, in Conference Room 1 of the United Nations building. On that day, survivors of nuclear weapons use, production, and testing witnessed a historic moment: a decisive majority of the international community cast a vote of categorical rejection of nuclear terror. This resounding vote called for a fundamental shift in nuclear policy, advocating for the total elimination of nuclear weapons as the only guarantee that they will never be used again under any circumstances.

We, people from diverse generations and walks of life, united in the belief that a legal prohibition on nuclear weapons was an act of justice for victims and a preventive measure toward achieving a world free from nuclear threats. We rejoiced to see survivors of atomic bombings and nuclear testing, finally find justice, recognition, and acknowledgment of their special assistance needs, from the international community.

In shaping this groundbreaking milestone, Hibakusha, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki stand as living testimonies to humanity's vulnerability and strength. My visits to Nagasaki and Hiroshima in 2017 profoundly impacted my understanding of the human cost of nuclear weapons. Witnessing the resilience of survivors, the *hibakusha*, who rebuilt their lives and communities despite immense suffering, inspired me to believe that we could not fail in our mission. The mayor of Nagasaki urged me to convey the urgency of achieving a legal prohibition on nuclear weapons before more survivors perished. And so I did.

When diplomats, scientists, pacifists, humanitarian workers, lawyers, non-governmental organizations, and countless others called for a new paradigm in the global conversation on nuclear weapons, the *hibakusha* and the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were at the forefront, offering firsthand evidence of the devastating consequences of nuclear weapons on humans, the environment, and socioeconomic structures. Their unwavering advocacy played a crucial role in shaping the strong belief and conviction that nuclear weapons should never be used again under any circumstances and must be abolished.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki never relinquished their dream of a better, more just, and secure world, working tirelessly to convey that vision through action, word, and day-by-day perseverance.

In 2020, as the world grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations commemorated its 75th anniversary. This sobering moment of reflection highlighted the dramatic changes that had occurred over the past seven decades and presented an opportunity for the organization to reevaluate its approach to global governance.

Building upon the lessons learned from both successes and failures, the upcoming Summit of the Future in September 2024, will serve as a platform for global leaders to agree on a new roadmap for international cooperation. This includes the reaffirmation of the commitments towards security, arms control, and disarmament.

The timing couldn't be more strategic. According to scientific studies analyzed by the First Meeting of States Parties (MSP) of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, it is feasible to determine that the abolition of a nuclear arsenal, even for the largest states, could be achieved within a decade. This decision, grounded in science and evidence, was reached at the First MSP.

However, it's challenging to write about hope in the face of current trends. Military buildup and expenditure have reached unprecedented levels, nuclear weapon arsenals are undergoing modernization and improvement, and the normative framework of international law and the nuclear taboo are being eroded by nuclear threats from Russia and a discourse that prioritizes war preparedness for security. The escalating great power competition and deteriorating security environment are a cause for grave concern for all citizens of the world and nations alike.

This is a moment in which we need to find strength, vision and inspiration. We need to drastically change course and humanity has the capacity to do so.

In that same line, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross highlighted in 2010 before the United Nations in Geneva, that "... the existence of nuclear weapons poses some of the most profound questions about the point at which the rights of States must yield to the interests of humanity, [and about] the capacity of our species to master the technology it creates...". In the same tone, in the message conveyed to the negotiation conference by Pope Francis on March 27th, 2017, he stressed the belief that Humanity "... has the freedom, intelligence, and capacity to lead and direct technology, to place limits on our power, and to put all this at the service of another type of progress: one that is more human, social and integral., and therefore, more conducive to structural peace."

This is the perspective that should guide the global conversation: not determinism, but human agency. In shaping the 21st-century discourse on security, peace, and disarmament, Hiroshima and Nagasaki — symbols of both humanity's vulnerability and resilience — serve as enduring reminders of the profound impact of nuclear weapons. As we approach 2045, marking the 100th anniversary of the nuclear era, these two cities, carrying the legacy of the Hibakusha, should lead the global dialogue on security and nuclear disarmament, grounded in the harsh realities of the devastating human and environmental consequences of nuclear weapons.

(August 2024)



Memoir of the A-bombing: To Those Who Do Not Know War

Tomoko Wakimasu

Hibakusha registered with our Foundation

August 6, 1945

I was three years old at the time. On that day, my mother and I took a train from Mukaihara Station on the Geibi Line to Hiroshima, planning to return to our home in Kure from my mother's parents' house in Yoshida Town, Takata County (at that time). However, due to the atomic bombing, we were all dropped off at Hesaka Station, so from there we headed on foot to Hiroshima Station (about 1.9 km from the hypocenter).

As we approached Hiroshima Station, we began to pass by people fleeing after the bombing, and when I saw them I said, "Ghosts! There are ghosts!" My mother later told an acquaintance that she felt sorry for the people around me and was really embarrassed at that time.

Eventually I was too scared and tired to walk, so my mother covered me with her clothes and carried me on her back as we walked. I don't remember much because I had my eyes tightly closed, but I

heard that Hiroshima Station was destroyed. We were told that trains were running from Mukainada, so we walked along the tracks to Mukainada Station, where my mother told me I could open my eyes. Then there was a man covered in bandages who reminded me of Frankenstein. A man with crutches. A man wearing what looked like a blanket, as if he had nothing to wear. ...They were not ghosts, but it was a scary sight to see.

When the sun was setting and it was getting dark, we were finally able to board the train and headed for Kure. From the window, we could see Hiroshima burning bright red as if scorching the sky.

After that, we traveled back and forth between Kure and Yoshida Town many times, partly because we were worried about my sister who was staying in Yoshida as part of a school evacuation program back then, and partly because we needed to get food.



View from inside Hiroshima Station looking southeast. The main waiting room is on the right and the platform is on the left. The roof and second floor of this section have collapsed. (Photo taken by the U.S. Army on November 18, 1945, courtesy of Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum)

Orphans who starved to death

"In Hiroshima, after dark there were continuous dark, dark nights. Even if we slept outside, not a single mosquito was to be seen. In the city of Hiroshima, where all living things had been burned to the ground, among the survivors were children who had lost their parents. There was nothing to eat, and one by one, they died. When someone picked up the corpse of one of the children to cremate, the mouth of the child who had died of starvation opened and inside was a small stone." At the time, there were no newspapers or radios, and this story was passed from person to person.

I was three years old, and I also watched as the adults tearfully saying, "Poor little thing, it must have been so hard for you, starving to death..." I wondered if the child was hungry and the stone looked like candy...maybe putting something in his mouth gave him comfort...it was so sad to see him die alone.... I imagined the child, and said, "Mother, if he drank water from the river and ate grass, he would not have died. Why didn't anyone tell him that?" Normally I would have been scolded for interrupting an adult's conversation, but all the adults were speechless with tears. After a while, my mother told me: "The town of Hiroshima was burned to the ground, leaving not a single blade of grass, not a single tree. There were no insects, and there was nothing to eat. People are saying that there will be no grass or trees for 70 years. Even if he wanted to eat grass, there wasn't any."

Do you know about radiation?

I was commissioned by the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation in April 2022 as a witness of the atomic bombing. Since then, I have been sharing my experiences with elementary, junior high, and high school students from all over Japan who visit Hiroshima as their school excursions for peace studies.

Many students interpreted the atomic bomb as simply a large bomb, one that would take the lives of many in an instant and wreak unimaginable destruction on a city. However, my storyis a decade-long struggle with low-grade fever after the bombing. Days of continuous vomiting and diarrhea. Days of being prone to bleeding and feeling anxious. Swollen thyroid gland. Days of suffering due to reduced heart function. When I told students about my heart that finally began to function normally 35 years after the bombing....., they said, "I mistakenly thought that those who survived the bombing were already fine. I learned for the first time that what is really frightening is the invisible effects of radiation." I realized how important it is to convey the horror of the effects of radiation.

At the same time, I was worried that perhaps the fear of radiation was not being conveyed to many people around the world.

When we were exposed to the atomic bomb in 1945, the general public had no knowledge of radiation. This led to a large number of victims who entered the city and suffered extensive damage from the atomic bombing. Those who managed to survive the atomic bombing at that time suffered from aftereffects for years and years afterward, leaving behind a great deal of medical data and testimonies of their A-bomb experiences. Are these facts acknowledged and do

they have an impact on people around the world? We believe that it is our duty as the A-bombed nation to present and share the entire reality of the atomic bombings to the world in a concrete way that everyone can understand.

I will do my utmost to serve in a small way.

Profile

[Tomoko Wakimasu]

Exposed to the atomic bombing when she was three. Author of "An Elderly Woman's Musings on Life (Japanese only)", "For the Person Who Doesn't Know About the War: My Life after Surviving the Atomic Bomb at Age Three" and "Don't Forget Hiroshima"

Peace Memorial Ceremony 79 Years Since the Atomic Bombing

On August 6th, 2024 the Peace Memorial Ceremony was held, where approximately 50,000 people, including hibakusha and bereaved families, gathered to offer prayers for the repose of the victims' souls and for lasting world peace.

In the Peace Declaration, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui proclaimed, "policymakers can overcome even critical situations through resolute commitment to dialogue," and appealed for us to determine, as our forebears did, to be



Mayor Matsui reading out the Peace Declaration
(Provided by the City of Hiroshima)

united as one with hope in our hearts, and to take collective action so that we will move leaders now relying on nuclear deterrence to shift their policies. Then he declared, "The city of Hiroshima, working with Mayors for Peace, will actively support community endeavors to raise peace consciousness." He also mentioned that the number of annual visitors to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum had reached an all-time high, reflecting growing awareness of peace, and he particularly called on youth, who will lead future generations, to visit Hiroshima and expand their "circle of hope". Furthermore, he urged the Japanese government to participate as an observer at the Third Meeting of States Parties to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and to become a party to this treaty.

In the following "Address", Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said that as the only country to have experienced the horror of nuclear devastation in war, Japan has the mission of steadily building up efforts over time towards the realization of a world without nuclear weapons. He further stated, "Working in tandem with hibakusha and others eager to bring about a world without nuclear weapons, Japan is determined to continue to do its utmost to pass down to the next generation messages from hibakusha as well as the tragic realities of the atomic bombings."

At this ceremony, a message from UN Secretary-General António Guterres was read by UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi

Nakamitsu. The Secretary-General said, “The lessons of Hiroshima, which once guided our collective efforts towards disarmament and peace, have been pushed aside.” Then it was stated that the dedication of the people of Hiroshima guides our own efforts at the United Nations to keep alive the lessons of 1945; lessons including, “any use of a nuclear weapon will have catastrophic humanitarian consequences,” and “the only path to eliminate the threats posed by nuclear weapons is to eliminate them altogether.”

In his Peace Message, Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki stated that as long as nuclear weapons exist, they will surely be used again someday and the abolition of nuclear weapons is a pressing and real issue that we should desperately engage in at this moment. Then he pointed out that we must allocate much more resources, including intellectual, human, and financial resources, to related initiatives in order to truly realize the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Children’s representatives, Akira Kato and Yuto Ishimaru read out the “Commitment to Peace”, saying, “Peace will not come from prayers alone,” and “Listening carefully to others, viewing differences as a good thing and reconsidering your perspective, cooperating with friends to accomplish a goal: these are all steps that each of us can take toward peace.”

(General Affairs Division)

80 years since the atomic bombing: Promotion of Peace Studies for Children in Japan in FY2025



Shiro Tani
Vice-Chairperson, Hiroshima Peace
Culture Foundation
(Mayors for Peace Secretariat)

In September last year, we called on all member cities of the Mayors for Peace in Japan to participate in the Program for Peace Studies in Hiroshima, which will provide children throughout Japan with opportunities for deep and interactive learning as we approach 2025, marking the 80th year since the atomic bombing. We mentioned three points: (1) the urgency and vital importance of raising the awareness of peace among the younger generation, as hibakusha and World War II survivors are getting very old and decreasing; (2) the significance of fostering a sense of respect for peace among children who take the peaceful days for granted by giving them a realistic experience of the A-bomb damage, which is the complete opposite of peace, in an A-bombed city; and (3) the establishment of a subsidy system by the city of Hiroshima for the dispatch expenses of each city, with assistance from the national government (assuming one-third of the amount is subsidized).

As a result, as of December 13 last year, we had already received applications for participation from 1,607 people (1,187 children and 420 staff, etc.) from 90 member cities in 25 prefectures throughout Japan, far exceeding the number for FY2024. In addition, more than 20 member cities are now actively considering participation. We hope that other member cities will consider joining us as well, as we are still open to accepting participants from now on.

Last December, I gave a presentation on school excursions to Hiroshima titled “A Moving Experience for Children” at the Kitatama Naka District junior high school principals’ meeting in Tokyo.

In my presentation, I spoke about actual initiatives at junior high schools in the Tama region, including (1) a curriculum to “nurture the ability to live” that is organized and implemented using 40 to 50 hours of integrated studies classes on themes such as life, human rights, environment, and peace consistently for three years; (2) the fact that the school excursion to Hiroshima is positioned as the culmination of this curriculum; (3) the fact that previous school excursions, while meaningful as historical tours, were more of sightseeing trips and did not build on the contents of the three-year study as the school excursion to Hiroshima did; (4) the benefits of the three years of study include a transformation in the students’ awareness of peace, as well as an improvement in their sense of independence and respect for others and society; and (5) positive evaluation from the parents.

We also explained the contents of this report to related organizations throughout Japan, and received the following three suggestions: (1) overtourism has been causing serious problems for school excursions since the pandemic, and there is a movement to rethink the future of school excursions themselves; (2) the National Curriculum Guidelines also call for school excursions to deepen experiences by clarifying the purpose and relating them to comprehensive study classes; and (3) with the international situation becoming increasingly tense, interest in peace study is growing, and study that addresses comprehensive themes such as peace, life, human rights, and the environment throughout a three-year period has the potential to become a leading case in the future.

At the principals’ meeting, I also explained two 2025 projects being considered by our Foundation. The first is a ‘Teachers Gathering to Consider Peace Studies’, which includes (1) presentations and discussions among teachers on case studies of the three-year curriculum and the culmination of the curriculum, including the implementation of the Hiroshima school excursion, and (2) an experience of the peace study program in Hiroshima. The second is the Designation System for Peace Study Monitoring Schools (20 schools×5 years = 100 schools to be designated), which includes (1) support for prior study, (2) support for peace study programs in

Hiroshima, and (3) grants (estimated at 3,000 yen per student). Considering the current situation where Hiroshima school excursions are mainly from schools in western Japan, as a trial for this project we are considering targeting public junior high schools in Tokyo and five prefectures in the Kanto region (Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, and Chiba). All interested schools and teachers are encouraged to actively participate.

Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum is considering developing an exhibit for children to learn about peace, aiming for FY 2027. On the occasion of the 80th year since the atomic bombing, we would like to further promote the creation of a system and framework to raise the peace awareness of the younger generation.



Download materials here.

Mayors for Peace Delegation Participated in the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 11th NPT Review Conference

Mayors for Peace sent a delegation to the second session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) for the 11th Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which met in Geneva, Switzerland. The delegation included President Kazumi Matsui (Mayor of Hiroshima), Vice President Shiro Suzuki (Mayor of Nagasaki), Secretary General Takehiro Kagawa (Chairperson of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation (HPCF)), and Vice Chairperson of the HPCF Shiro Tani.

At the conference, we were convinced that, while the international situation is becoming increasingly tense and progress in nuclear disarmament is facing difficult circumstances, future-oriented discussions are beginning to take place to promote progress, including the need to further advance humanitarian initiatives.

During this visit, the delegation was able to meet and exchange a wide range of opinions with representatives from the United Nations, the Japanese government, and nuclear-weapon states, as well as with representatives from countries promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) and international peace NGOs. Through these dialogues, we reaffirmed the critical importance of advancing advocacy efforts at international conferences. And we are also convinced of the vital importance of outreach activities, such as peace education through platforms like Mayors for Peace and the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, in collaboration with relevant organizations, with the fundamental focus on contributing to the development and dissemination of international humanitarian initiatives, while keeping the reality of the atomic bombing in mind.

Speeches at the NGO presentations session

President Matsui emphasized that the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which clearly demonstrate that the use of nuclear weapons will lead to the destruction of humanity, should be the basis for the abolition of nuclear weapons. He profoundly



President Matsui and Vice President Suzuki at the NGO session

concerned that, with the current international circumstances, the perception of nuclear weapons are drastically shifting from ‘weapons that must never be used’ to ‘weapons that can be used under certain conditions’, though Hiroshima and Nagasaki have continued to advocate that nuclear weapons must never be used. He went on to point out that the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum saw a record number of annual visitors, indicating that an increased sense of alarm regarding the current international situation has brought so many visitors to reaffirm the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons. He also implored policymakers to take into account the voices of a peace-loving civil society, and to reconsider their support for arms races and for strengthening nuclear capabilities immediately and instead, adopt diplomatic efforts through dialogue and advance concrete nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation measures. Next, Vice-President Suzuki spoke about the devastating consequences of using nuclear weapons on people and cities. He then appealed to all nations, especially those possessing nuclear weapons, stating, “Nuclear weapons must never be used. The only way for humanity to avoid the risk of nuclear weapons is to abolish them.” He concluded his speech by sharing with the world the common wish of humanity, “Make Nagasaki the last wartime atomic bombing site.”

Thus, at the session, the mayors of the two atomic bombed cities strongly appealed to the governments of each country about the inhumanity of nuclear weapons, based on the reality of the atomic bombings, as a fact that serves as the most important foundation for advancing nuclear disarmament.

Meetings with Representatives of the UN

The delegation met with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Office at Geneva (UNOG), the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), and the Director of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), and exchanged views on future cooperation between each organization and Mayors for Peace. In the meeting with Secretary-General of the UNOG, the discussion also touched upon how to further develop the exhibition on the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki currently being held at the headquarters in Geneva.

At the screening of the documentary film “Paper Lanterns⁽¹⁾”, co-hosted by UNIDIR and Delegation of Japan

(1) This documentary film features the work of Mr. Shigeaki Mori, who had searched for the identities of the 12 American prisoners of war who died in the Hiroshima atomic bombing for over 40 years and after all met bereaved families.

to the Conference on Disarmament, President Matsui gave opening remarks, stating, “I pray that future generations will not repeat the tragic history experienced by those in this film.”

This film expresses the wonderful mutual understanding between the people of Japan and the United States, and it reminds us that mutual understanding among citizens of various countries is key to spreading awareness of the reality of the atomic bombings internationally.

Meetings with Representatives of Nuclear Weapon States

The Mayors for Peace delegation met with representatives of three nuclear weapons states: France, the United States and the UK. In the meetings, we explained that both states have Mayors for Peace member cities and referred to the increasing number of peace-loving members of civil society calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We implored each representative to value the voice of civil society, adopt diplomatic efforts through dialogue, take initiatives in good faith, and support the initiatives of Mayors for Peace. We also exchanged views on each country’s approach to nuclear disarmament.

Meeting with countries promoting the TPNW

The delegation also met with representatives from Thailand, Ireland, and Mexico, as well as the Chair of the second session of the NPT PrepCom, who is also the government representative of Kazakhstan. We expressed our respect to the long-standing efforts to promote the TPNW and asked for their understanding and cooperation with the initiatives of Mayors for Peace, calling for all states to join the TPNW at the earliest date.

Ambassador Usana Berananda of Thailand stated that as one of the founding members of the TPNW, Thailand is promoting the complementarity of the TPNW with the NPT and would like to cooperate with global organizations such as Mayors for Peace. She stated clearly that the experiences of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki concretely demonstrate the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

During the PrepCom, Thailand and Ireland co-hosted a side event to discuss the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. In this event, Irish Ambassador Noel White stated that experts should be invited to the NPT to discuss humanitarian consequences.

Meeting with international peace NGOs

The delegation met with representatives from ICAN, the Arms Control Association (ACA), Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW), Marshall Education Institute, and the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation (NAPF). The delegation informed them of plans to hold atomic bomb poster exhibitions around the world for the 80th year since the atomic bombing approaching next year, and to promote peace education, especially among the younger generations. Also the delegation called for support for Mayors for Peace, for example by asking relevant NGOs to cooperate in countries where the poster

exhibition will be held, and agreed to work together with them even further in the future.

Mayors for Peace Youths Activities

Eight high school students engaged in peace activities in Hiroshima were dispatched to this PrepCom as “Mayors for Peace Youth” to nurture the next generation of peace activists. During the meeting with Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations, a youth handed her a certificate of approximately 44,000 signatures calling for all states to join the TPNW at the earliest date.



UN Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu (back row, center) and Mayors for Peace Youths (high school students from Hiroshima)

Mayors for Peace Youth Forum, held as a side event for the PrepCom, featured presentations by eight groups of young people, including Mayors for Peace Youth and young people engaged in peace activities around the world. They exchanged opinions on challenges in promoting peace activities. Participating youths commented, “It was a good opportunity to get to know people of the same age who are involved in a variety of activities and roles,” and “I was reminded of the importance of working toward the abolition of nuclear weapons from various perspectives, without being restricted by traditional frameworks.” In closing remarks, Ms. Nakamitsu stated that the future belongs to the youth and thus, the youth should always be involved in the decision-making process to make the future better. She encouraged everyone present to continue to be involved in peace activities and to continue to develop them.

During the meeting with Ms. Ichikawa, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, she encouraged the youths to see the footage and documents related to the reality of the atomic bombings with their own eyes, feel them with their own hearts, and then, to explain those in their own words to many people in their future activities.

They also met with Ms. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). She explained to the youths that the WTO is striving to make the world a peaceful and sustainable place, and to combat climate change through trade systems. Afterwards, the youths asked her questions about approaches to the abolition of nuclear weapons and gender, and the Director-General, one of the most famous female leaders in the world, answered them carefully and gave encouragement to the younger generation.

(Mayors for Peace Administration Division)

Visit to England and Ireland, Holding of Executive Conference of Mayors for Peace

UK Visit

The 13th Executive Conference of Mayors for Peace was held in Manchester, England, which is a Vice-President City of the Mayors for Peace.

13th Executive Conference of Mayors for Peace

The Executive Conference commenced with a review of the ongoing initiatives implemented under the current Action Plan (2021–2025). In particular, it was confirmed that Mayors for Peace will continue to focus on the promotion of a culture of peace, as each city is actively working to foster citizens' awareness of peace.

The secretariat then explained that the next action plan, which will cover the period from 2025 to 2029, will focus on the creation of an organizational framework centered on the secretariat and leader cities, and that it will place priority on sharing and communicating the reality of the ravages of war, and fostering youth who will be responsible for peace activities in the next generation.

Participants also held active discussions on the 11th General Conference of Mayors for Peace to be held in Nagasaki City, the resumption of the Youth Exchange for Peace Support Program, and the holding of the A-bomb Poster Exhibition for Peace Support Program, and the holding of the A-bomb Poster Exhibition for the 80th year since the atomic bombings in 2025.

During the discussions, participants exchanged views on the financial foundations for continued and stable activities. There were various comments and opinions on membership fees and donations and these will continue to be considered.

Based on these discussions, a summary notes of the Conference was adopted.

Through our attendance at this Executive Conference, we were reminded that, despite the current international situation of doubt and suspicion among nations, we, the Executive Cities of the Mayors for Peace, are united in our unwavering bond and share a strong desire for peace.

As an organization composed of local government leaders who protect the safety and security of their citizens, we will continue to work together with our member cities around the world in order to create a world where we can share a culture of peace in civil society including peace study for young citizens, aiming for the abolition of nuclear weapons and the realization of lasting world peace, while further deepening our solidarity with each other.



Executive Conference

Visit to Ireland

Before his visit to the UK, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, President of Mayors for Peace, was invited to Ireland, a country promoting the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), to convey the “Spirit of Hiroshima”, a desire for a peaceful world without nuclear weapons that overcomes the deep sorrow and hatred of the past. He also called for understanding and cooperation in the efforts of the Mayors for Peace.

Speech in the Irish Parliament Senate

In his speech, Mayor Matsui quoted a passage from the work of the Irish Nobel Prize laureate Seamus Heaney, who said “how important hope is in the face of adversity.” He then referred to the testimony of hibakusha, Teruko Yahata and the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations, and stated that, with the worsening of global security, “this must be the time to unite the voices of peace-loving people around the world and strengthen their solidarity for peace” in order to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons.

Mayor Matsui also called for more Irish cities to join the Mayors for Peace, as Irish people with their rich culture can lead a culture of peace in the world. He received a warm round of applause.

In response, the representatives of each political party made speeches in which they expressed their “understanding of the reality of the atomic bombings” and their “solidarity with the activities of the Mayors for Peace”.

Meeting with Ireland's President

Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland, gave encouragement to the Mayors for Peace and their activities, saying that building relationships among cities is important and wishing Mayors for Peace well in the future. When Mayor Matsui



Mayor Matsui shaking hands with President Higgins (left)

told the President that he is emphasizing the importance of communicating to the government what the citizens want and need now, and letting young people understand that fighting is the wrong path to take, the President said that nothing is more important than to appeal to the conscience that each citizen has and to promote learning.

Visit to the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb poster exhibition and exchange activities with local youth

The ‘Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb’ poster exhibition and the ‘Sadako and the Paper Cranes’ poster exhibition were held with the full cooperation of the Embassy of Japan in Ireland. Mayor Matsui attended the opening ceremonies at three locations and interacted with local students. The Q&A session with visitors provided an opportunity to further deepen their understanding of the reality of the atomic

bombings and the inhumanity of nuclear weapons.

During the visit to Ireland, we learned about the Irish people's desire for peace, who know the pain caused by war and violence, and deeply resonated with the fact that, as in Hiroshima, the citizens of Ireland have chosen the path of reconciliation.

We will continue to further strengthen our ties with the country and its member cities by expanding the number of member cities of the Mayors for Peace in Ireland and by promoting a culture of peace.

At the same time, through interactions with young people in Ireland, we were deeply encouraged by the interest many of them have in peace and were reminded of the importance of learning peace. As the hibakusha continue to age, it is important to pass the baton on to the next generation of young people, to ensure that a culture of peace will take root in civil society.

(Mayors for Peace Administration Division)

UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament

The UN Disarmament Fellowship is a training program by the United Nations for young diplomats and others to train disarmament experts, especially in developing countries. The decision to implement the program was made at the first session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament in 1978. Every year, program participants visit countries around the world, including Hiroshima and

Nagasaki, and undertake training in the A-bombed cities to convey the inhumanity of nuclear weapons based on the experience of the atomic bombings.

Hiroshima hosted the 41st training program with 25 participants from 25 countries over a 3-day period.

On the first day of the training, Shiro Tani, Vice Chairperson of our Foundation, explained the widespread devastation caused by the atomic bombings in the context of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use, highlighting it as the foundation for humanitarian initiatives. Then Ms. Keiko Ogura gave a lecture on her A-bomb experience, and the participants visited the Peace Memorial Museum.

After the training on the first day, the participants had an opportunity to interact with hibakusha, councilors and executive officers and staff members of our Foundation. High school and university students who are Youth Peace Volunteers actively served as interpreters to bridge the conversation, and participants greatly deepened their friendships.



Program participants, A-bomb survivors, and Foundation staff

Mayors for Peace Internship

The Mayors for Peace Secretariat annually invites young officials from member cities to Hiroshima as interns. This internship program aims to strengthen collaboration with member cities by engaging them in the Mayors for Peace initiatives at the Secretariat. It is also hoped that, by deepening their understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings and sharing the "Spirit of Hiroshima" in the wish for peace, participants will be motivated to pursue initiatives toward realizing lasting world peace in their home cities after completing the program.

From June 19 to July 3, 2024, the Mayors for Peace Secretariat welcomed Mr. Harun Pašić from Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina (an Executive City of Mayors for Peace and the



Ms. Keiko Ogura, hibakusha (middle) and the interns

Lead City of the country) and Ms. Iuliia Panfylova from Tasman District, New Zealand as interns.

Upon completion of the internship program, they made the following comments.

Mr. Harun Pašić / Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

"The Bosnian conflict in the 1990s resulted in large-scale urban destruction and the deaths of many civilians. Cruel humanitarian issues arose, and the scars remain to this day. Like Hiroshima, as a city that experienced the tragedy of war and seeks peace, Sarajevo will promote the initiatives of Mayors for Peace throughout its own country and the Balkan region."

Ms. Iuliia Panfylova / Tasman District, New Zealand

"I will expand the call for participation in the Mayors for Peace 'Children's Art Competition: Peaceful Towns' to other organizations as well as schools, to provide more children with the opportunity to learn and think about peace. I would also like to create an opportunity for the people of Tasman to hear the experiences of hibakusha."

(Mayors for Peace Administration Division)

On the second day, a VR tour was conducted to visually experience the reality of the atomic bombing. The participants also toured the Atomic Bomb Dome, the Cenotaph, and other sites in Peace Memorial Park through the guidance of the Youth Peace Volunteers.

On the final day, facilitated by Takehiro Kagawa, Chairperson of our Foundation, participants discussed the challenges of building a peaceful world and what they should work on in their respective capacities in the future after the training in Hiroshima.

Through this training, the participants commented that they were “heartbroken by the suffering experienced by the hibakusha,” “gained a deeper understanding of the long-term and multifaceted effects of the atomic bombings,” and “as a diplomat, I will continue to raise awareness of the importance of nuclear disarmament and work toward achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world.”

It is very important to deepen interaction between young diplomats from various countries, who will be responsible for future security, and the younger generation in Hiroshima who are concerned about peace.

(Public Collaboration for Peace Division)

New Atomic Bomb Paintings Complete High School Students Paint Pictures of Atomic Bomb Experience

With the cooperation of the Creative Expression Course of Hiroshima Municipal Motomachi High School, this Foundation is working with students to produce atomic bomb paintings, in which hibakusha and students of the school work together to convey the situation at the time by depicting scenes that remain in the memories of the hibakusha.

Last year, 7 hibakusha and 16 students worked on the project and 16 paintings were completed. Since the request was first made to Motomachi High School in 2007, over 170 students have cooperated to produce a total of 207 precious paintings.

When Mr. Sakoda was seven years old, he was struck by a sudden, heavy (because of radioactive materials) “black rain” in the mountains of present-day Asa Town, about 19 kilometers northwest of the hypocenter. The picture depicts Mr. Sakoda and other children who were unaware that it was dangerous rain and were excited and looking at



“My Memorandum”

Acting as a Catalyst for “Hibakusha” to Become Established as an English Word

Shoichi Fujii

Former Director of the International Relation Division, the City of Hiroshima

On December 10, 2024, the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo) was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. As a Japanese citizen and a resident of Hiroshima, I am deeply moved by this recognition. The *Mainichi* editorial states, “Voices of hibakusha reaching the world,” and various English-language newspapers have also adopted the term hibakusha.

I would like to explain here how the Peace Declaration, proclaimed by the Mayor of Hiroshima, has played a pivotal role in the recognition of hibakusha as an English word.

From 1985 to 1992, I served as the Director of the International Relation Division of the City of Hiroshima. At that time, individuals who had experienced the atomic bomb were commonly referred to in English as “atomic bomb survivors”. For many years, the City of Hiroshima used the English translation “hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors)”.

One day in 1985, Ms. Barbara Reynolds — who had accompanied hibakusha on two world peace pilgrimages to the U.S., Europe, and other regions, founded the World Friendship Center in 1965, and holds Hiroshima City Special Honorary Citizenship — remarked, “Mr. Fujii, over the years, I have met many hibakusha. These

individuals can’t escape the physical and mental suffering they endure for the rest of their lives. However, a survivor is someone who ultimately overcomes the disease or disaster and recovers. Therefore, it is crucial that the term hibakusha becomes established as the English equivalent of this word.”

At the time, I made every effort to convey Ms. Reynolds’ advice to Mayor Araki and other officials because I firmly believed that using the term hibakusha was the only way to accurately convey the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons use. As a result, I gained their understanding, and starting with the 1988 English version of the Peace Declaration, the term hibakusha began to appear on its own.

The Hiroshima Peace Declaration is announced to the world at 8:15 a.m. every August 6. I believe the City of Hiroshima’s decision to adopt hibakusha in the Peace Declaration is one of the key reasons why the term has now become recognized as an English word.



Monument to Barbara Reynolds in Peace Memorial Park.

it curiously. Mr. Sakoda said, “Ms. Mochida has made the events in my memory visible. I hope many people will see this painting and feel the power and horror of the atomic bombing.”



“Children excited by the sudden ‘black rain’ - not knowing that it was dangerous rain containing radioactive materials” (Created by: Anju Mochida (Motomachi High School), Isao Sakoda (hibakusha))

This is the second time for Ms. Mochida to work on an atomic bomb painting. She said “In order to prevent this mistake from being repeated, I think it is important not only to think about what happened on August 6, 1945, but also to consider how much impact it has had on the present. There are things I realized precisely because it was my second production, and I want to share them in my own words with as many people as possible in the future.”

The atomic bomb paintings completed through the efforts of the hibakusha and students will be used to help better understand the testimonies by the hibakusha, and will also be used to pass on the reality of the A-bomb damage to future generations by lending original paintings and providing image data to citizens and the media.

(Peace Memorial Museum Outreach Division)

International Festival 2024

Let's Open the Door to the World
Let's Meet Friends from Around the World

This event was held on November 24 last year. 69 citizen groups and companies engaged in international exchange and cooperation activities in Hiroshima City and its suburbs held a variety of events attracting approximately 2,000 visitors; themes included multiculturalism, intercultural understanding, the global environment, and experiencing Japanese culture. It was a day for both Japanese and non-Japanese participants to experience cultures from around the world.

Calligraphy performance by the Department of Calligraphy, Faculty of Letters, Yasuda Women's University

The opening ceremony featured a calligraphy performance by students of Yasuda Women's University's Department of Calligraphy, who dynamically wrote kanji



characters that represent “connection”. This was met with enthusiastic applause from the visitors.

Win Morisaki Talk; “Building a society that recognizes diversity and coexists in harmony”

The guest speaker was actor Win Morisaki. He talked with the panelists about his own experience of being born in Myanmar and spending time in Japan from the age of 10, the need for mutual understanding when working internationally, and the message



Win Morisaki at the talk

he wanted to convey. It proved a good opportunity to think about diversity and multiculturalism with over 120 visitors.

A variety of events at the International Festival

14 groups set up booths to introduce their international exchange and cooperation activities at the Citizen's Group Activities corner.

Over at the World Culture Experience corner, a Chinese paper-cutting workshop and a Chinese-style kumi-himo (braided cord) handcrafting workshop were held, and at the Japanese Culture Experience corner, there was a opportunity to try wearing kimono, as well as participating in tea ceremony, ikebana, and calligraphy.

In addition, 13 groups sold a variety of foods from around the world at the Hiroshima International Village - Global Food Stalls on the Peace Boulevard greenbelt south of the International Conference Center. In addition, 9 organizations participated in the International Cooperation Bazaar, selling folk crafts and other items from various countries.

Presentation of youth international exchange activities

Four groups of young people from Hiroshima who held exchange activities with young people from overseas gave presentations on their experiences and their impressions of the activities (see the photo of the exchange activities on the front cover).

Those who visited Pearl Harbor National Memorial with hibakusha, as part of the sister park agreement between Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park and Pearl Harbor National Memorial, reported that they exchanged opinions with local young people and that there were many questions about the situation at the time of the atomic bombing and its after-effects. They commented that they were impressed by the attitude of the young people who were actively trying to understand Hiroshima. In an exchange with a family member of a veteran who experienced the attack on Pearl Harbor, the family member said, “It's important to try to understand each other, not hate each other.” Based on these experiences, the young people stressed the importance of reconciliation and having future-oriented exchanges about peace. They also expressed their determination to make use of what they have learned this time to continue exchange activities with the local people and to engage in activities to convey the reality of the atomic bombing.

(City Diversity & Inclusion Division)