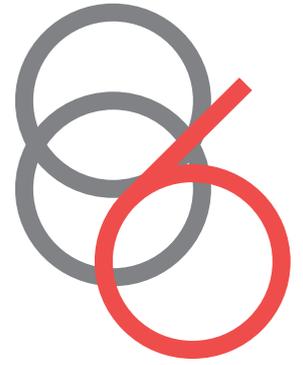


PEACE 平和文化 CULTURE



No.94 (semiannual)

A Peaceful Future Led by Children



The 1st Japan Children's Peace Summit
Mr. Fumiaki Kajiya's A-bomb testimony

The 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering
Lively and constructive discussion



The 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering
A closing photo full of bright smiles



The 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering
Children listening attentively to an A-bomb testimony



The 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering
Greeting by Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui



The 1st Japan Children's Peace Summit
Greeting by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General



The 1st Japan Children's Peace Summit
Participants filling a large hall

CONTENTS

Image: A Peaceful Future Led by Children	1	Launch of the 1st Japan Teachers' Meeting on Peace Studies	11
International Symposium to Commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing Explores Hiroshima's Position and Role	2	Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb and Peace Photo Poster Exhibition Held at the United Nations University	12
Peace Studies for the Younger Generation Initiated Nationwide (Hiroshima Peace Studies Promotion Program) – Discover a new self through a heartfelt experience in Hiroshima, an atomic-bombed city – ...	8		



International Symposium to Commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing Explores Hiroshima's Position and Role

Mr. Kiyoshi Tanimoto, who had been working widely in the U.S. to testify about his experience as a hibakusha, expressed his determination by saying: “A method for making a lasting contribution to world peace must be developed from our own experiences in Hiroshima.” Meanwhile, he also shared his awareness of the problem that “although we have plenty of emotional appeal, we still lack the ideological principles that is necessary for us to powerfully convey our appeal.”

The Humanitarian Initiative can be considered to exactly constitute the “ideological principles” that Mr. Tanimoto mentioned. This is the principle of emphasizing the inevitability of abolishing nuclear weapons, going beyond the theory of national security and nuclear deterrence, on the basis that they can destroy humanity. It has been supported from over 180 states, and it has provided the strongest grounds for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which entered into force in 2021.

On August 6, 2025, we held an International Symposium to Commemorate the 80th Anniversary of the Atomic Bombing bringing together hibakusha and leading figures from around the world. The symposium was aimed at embodying the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences,” which provide the basis of the Humanitarian Initiative, based on Hiroshima’s experience of the atomic bombing, and declaring our strong support for the initiative.

Approximately 200 people attended the symposium, including 40 ambassadors and other embassy staff from 27 countries represented in Japan, who also attended the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, mayors who later attended the Mayors for Peace General Assembly, and promising young people, such as participants in the International Youth Conference for Peace in the Future.

[Part 1: Session with Hibakusha]

Part 1 of the symposium was dedicated to a session featuring the testimonies of hibakusha. It began with a screening of a 20-minute video titled “The Experience of Hiroshima that Embodies the Destruction of Humanity” (featuring testimonies from four hibakusha: Akiko Takakura, Akihiro Takahashi, Yoshito Matsushige, and Shunichiro Arai). This was followed by a session moderated by Dr. Luli van der Does, Director of the Center for Peace and Associate Professor at the Graduate School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hiroshima University. Three hibakusha—Sadae Kasaoka, Yoshiko Kajimoto, and Kiyomi Kono—took to the stage to

testify about their experiences. The testimonies of the seven hibakusha provided a basis for verification of how nuclear weapons could destroy humanity (the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons). The specific content of the session can be outlined as follows:

[Damage caused by intense heat rays]

“(Immediately after being exposed to the bombing inside the office near the hypocenter,) I left and tried to escape to the military drill ground, but the entire field was a sea of fire—truly a sea of fire! The temple behind the office was also destroyed and burning.”

(Ms. Takakura)



Burning Streetcar
Painted by Yoshio Takahara
Source: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum



A line of fleeing hibakusha
Testimony of
Akihiro Takahashi
Source: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

“On my way (while evacuating), I saw many hibakusha fleeing in a line. Everyone had their arms stretched out in front of them, with skin hanging down in strips, and their clothes in tatters, leaving some practically naked. Among them were a man with shards of glass embedded in his body, another man whose skin was peeling away, a woman whose eyeball had been forced out, and another woman whose body was covered in blood. There were dead bodies lying around, their internal organs spilled out. The mother and her baby, both with severe burns, were also lying at the side of the road. I heard the baby wailing, and I can still hear the cries in my ears. I found a horse, whose entire body was burned, dead with its head stuck in a water tank. There is an expression ‘hell on earth,’ and what we experienced after the bombing was exactly that ‘hell on earth.’” (Mr. Takahashi)



Ms. Yoshiko
Kajimoto

“From the hypocenter came people who looked like ghosts with their arms stretched forward, their burned skin hung down from their fingertips like rags. Their clothes were either blown away or burned off, leaving them completely naked. Their faces were swollen like balloons, their lips turned up, and blood was flowing from their heads and other parts of their bodies. Staggering in a line, they looked like a procession of ghosts. Among them was a middle school boy holding his severed

arm, who collapsed and died right in front of me. His terrified, sorrowful face remains in my memory. A mother cradled a dead baby wandering around in madness, screaming incoherently. These wretched figures kept coming. None of them looked human. ... The city was littered with corpses. Despite trying not to step on them, I remember vividly the slippery sensation of stepping on dangling skin. On the streets were people with their eyes protruding, others with their entrails spilling out, pieces of flesh scattered around, and the smell of blood—it was hell on earth itself.” (Ms. Kajimoto)

“To the west of Miyuki-bashi Bridge was a police station, and two police officers were dabbing cooking oil onto people’s burns. Most of the people there were first- and second-year junior high school students. They had been directly exposed to the heat rays while working outside to demolish buildings to prevent fires from spreading. On their backs, faces, shoulders and arms, ball-shaped blisters had formed. Those blisters were torn and the skin was hanging down like rags. Probably from running barefoot through fire, some children even had burns on the soles of their feet. ... I hesitated to take pictures for about 20 minutes, struggling with whether I should photograph people who were suffering like this. In the end, I managed to get one shot, then moved about 4–5 meters closer to take a second. I still remember that hell on earth clearly.” (Mr. Matsushige)



Hibakusha at the west end of Miyuki-bashi Bridge
Photo: Yoshito Matsushige
© The Chugoku Shimibun
Collection: Photo Archives of Japan



“Are You Really Dad?”
Painted by Minami Ogawa
Source: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

“When I saw my father lying on the wooden board, I couldn’t believe he was alive. His face was swollen and his clothes were burned, leaving his entire body shining black. It was only when I heard his voice that I realized he was my father. We had no medicine, so we grated cucumber and potato, and used them as compresses. His body was burned and hot, so they dried quickly. When we touched the blackened areas, they peeled off, revealing red skin underneath. His burns were not only on the surface but deep inside as well. ... My father passed away on the night of August 8, deeply worried about my missing mother and us, his young children.” (Ms. Kasaoka)



Ms. Sadae Kasaoka

[Damage caused by tremendous blast wind]

“We were all looking up at the sky (in the middle school playground) and pointing, watching the plane go by. That’s when it happened. There was a tremendous roar, and everything was plunged into darkness. It was so dark that we couldn’t even see our hand in front of our face. I had been blown off by the blast. ... After it got light, I realized that I had been blown about 10 meters backwards. All my friends had also been blown away, lying all over the schoolyard. The school and the neighboring houses were destroyed, and when I looked off into the distance, it seemed like the whole city of Hiroshima had disappeared.” (Mr. Takahashi)

“(When I finally managed to get out from under the collapsed building,) I found the city of Hiroshima flattened. The scorching sun that had been shining so brightly was gone. It was dark and eerily quiet, and there was a strange smell like rotten fish. Five or six friends made it out from under the collapsed building. Their hair was standing on end, their bodies completely blackened, some were bleeding from their heads, some had their flesh torn off their arms so that their skin was hanging, and some had their flesh torn off their legs so that their bones were visible. Their white uniforms were soaked in blood. Everybody was half-mad. One friend who had been pinned under the debris was the worst injured. Her arm was dangling, barely attached by a single piece of skin, making the bone visible. It was so pitiful and scary to look at.” (Ms. Kajimoto)

“I was resting at home that day (August 6). (The moment the atomic bomb was dropped,) I saw everything outside my window turning bright red. No, it was a beautiful color like the rising sun mixed with orange. At that moment there was a loud “boom” and at the same time, the glass broke into pieces and flew towards me. The tremendous pressure of the blast pushed me backwards and I lost consciousness for a moment. ... We couldn’t just sit in fear, so we went outside. Houses had caught fire, were tilted, and their roof tiles and walls were scattered around them. (Ms. Kasaoka)

[Damage caused by radiation]

“I was bedridden throughout the rest of August. I had no appetite, with a high fever and profuse bleeding gums. The wound on my arm had festered. It was crawling with maggots. My grandmother, crying as she did so, picked them out one by one with chopsticks. ... My father was exposed at home, 2.5 kilometers from the hypocenter. Although he suffered neither burns nor other injuries at the time, about a year and a half later, he began vomiting blood and died shortly thereafter. I believe it was because he was exposed

to residual radiation from walking through the burnt ruins for three days, turning over corpses in his search for me. ... Later, in 1999, I underwent surgery to remove two-thirds of my stomach due to stomach cancer. Many of my friends also died of cancer. Even now, 80 years later, I continue to develop new diseases, suffering from anemia and brain tumors.” (Ms. Kajimoto)



Mr. Shunichiro
Arai

“Actually, I’m currently suffering from my sixth cancer. The first time I was diagnosed with cancer was in 1984, when I was in my 50s. That first cancer was found in my right kidney and I later developed cancer in various parts of my body, and lived on the verge of death. My doctor told me that I was a typical patient with multiple cancers caused by radiation. Now I have another kidney cancer, and there is nothing that can be done about it. And it is at stage 4. This is my destiny. That is to say, the impact of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima did not end 80 years ago. It is still affecting all hibakusha, just as shown by myself. I will continue to testify about that as a living witness.” (Mr. Arai)

[Devastation of downtown Hiroshima]

“The moment I got off the train on the platform at Yaga Station, I was hit by an awful stench, like the smell of burnt animals or rotting flesh. It stung my eyes and nose, and made it hard to breathe. I finally got used to it and opened my eyes. I was shocked. I found no trace of the city of Hiroshima or the houses that had stood there until the last day. Smoke was still smoldering here and there.” (Ms. Kono)



Ms. Kiyomi
Kono

“When I entered the city, I found dead bodies scattered everywhere. The bodies exposed to the heat rays had turned dark brown and swollen. I couldn’t tell if they were men or women. There were people whose eyes were flowing and jelly-like; others whose tongues were triangular and sticking out like horns; and still others whose internal organs had ruptured and turned a dark yellow in color. Brains had also flowed out. It was the scariest memory of my entire life.” (Ms. Kono)

“The Japanese Red Cross Hospital was in a terrible state, with all the windows blown out by the blast. I saw many bloodied people being carried in from all directions. They were laid in rows at the entrance, and in the hallways. They were crying: ‘It hurts! It hurts!’ ‘Help me!’ ‘Give me water!’ or ‘Mom!’ An old woman in a *yukata* robe said: ‘I’m



Corpses on a Flowerbed at Japanese Red Cross Hospital
Painted by Kiyomi Kono

Source: Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum

already old, so just end my life quickly.’ The cries echoed off the concrete walls of the hospital, growing into a loud, wailing roar. There was also a shortage of doctors and nurses, as many of them were injured. ... There was a large round flower bed at the driveway at the hospital. I had always seen it, lush and green, but that day the bodies of boys were carelessly piled up like logs. I thought they were exposed to the atomic bomb while working together to demolish buildings around there. Even though they were first-year junior high school boys, they had the physique of fifth graders due to the lack of nutrition. They had an innocent look on their faces and looked like they were asleep. They must have wanted to go home and see their mothers, but not a single one was able to be with their parents, and they were all cremated together.” (Ms. Kono)

“Looking down at the river from Miyuki-bashi Bridge, I saw many pure white corpses floating, some facing up and some facing down. ... Near the hypocenter, I happened to look at a streetcar and saw something black hanging inside. Wondering what they



Arms Holding onto Straps
Painted by Kiyomi Kono

Courtesy of Kiyomi Kono

were, I looked closer and found that they were arms holding the straps, torn off from bodies. They were charred like coal. This terrified me as well, because there was no human figure left. Soldiers were crouching in front of the Fukuya Department Store. These soldiers were not bleeding and their clothes were not dirty. It was strange, but in hindsight, I think they had died from exposure to radiation.” (Ms. Kono)

Dr. Luli van der Does concluded the session by stating: “The atomic bomb destroyed the entire city in an instant, and many of the citizens who lived there suffered truly horrible deaths. Corpses were piled high in the streets and the squares of



Dr. Luli van der
Does

Hiroshima, and many citizens were burned and seriously injured, yet they wandered like ghosts, trying to return home where their families were waiting. Unfortunately, many lost their lives just after returning home. Furthermore, the radiation from the atomic bomb caused not only immediate acute injuries, but also, 80 years later, continues to inflict leukemia, cancer, and numerous physical and psy-

chological sufferings. All these actually happened. ... What we want to convey is that such a catastrophic and inhumane outcome must never be repeated, so that we can continue to exist. Humanity and nuclear weapons can't coexist. No matter what else we may lose, what we must never lose is life itself. I hope you will think about what we can do now to continue preserving our lives. And when you recall the stories of hibakusha, please imagine your own face and the faces of those you love overlapping with theirs. Nuclear weapons kill instantly and indiscriminately; they are inhumane weapons. If we want to protect those we love, we must choose to eradicate nuclear weapons from this earth.”

[Part 2: Panel Discussion]



Dr. Keiko
Nakamura

The second part of the event was a panel discussion moderated by Dr. Keiko Nakamura, Associate Professor, Research Center for Nuclear Weapons Abolition (RECNA), Nagasaki University. The panelists were Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General of Disarmament Affairs and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; Ambassador Alexander Kmentt, then Director of the Disarmament, Arms Control and Non-Proliferation Department of the Austrian Foreign Ministry; (now Austria's Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva) the Honorable Melissa Parke, Executive Director of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN); Professor Emeritus Mitsuru Kurosawa, Osaka University; the Honorable Kasit Piromya, Special Advisor of Mayors for Peace and former Foreign Minister of Thailand; and Mr. Shiro Tani, Vice-Chairperson of the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation and Deputy Secretary-General of Mayors for Peace. They discussed the importance of placing the Humanitarian Initiative at the center of all discussions on nuclear disarmament and the role that Hiroshima should play in this regard.

At the beginning of the discussion, Ambassador Kmentt stated his view on this issue as follows:

“The Humanitarian Initiative offers a way to look at what nuclear weapons do when they are used—not in a sanitized, abstract way in which they are often discussed in nuclear diplomacy. Because when we understand the magnitude of the devastation and the threat it poses to all life on the planet and to the survival of humanity, looking at them from a narrow national security perspective as tools for national defense seems completely absurd and anachronistic. The Humanitarian Initiative, therefore, also



Ambassador
Alexander
Kmentt

means discussing nuclear weapons from a planetary security perspective. I still think that the arguments, the scientific evidence and the human experiences, such as the testimonies of hibakusha, remain the best way to have more impact on the nuclear-weapon states and to move away from reliance on nuclear weapons. Today much more reliable data and scientific evidence is available about the catastrophic, complex, and cascading humanitarian consequences and risks of nuclear weapons that would affect populations and cities all over the world in dramatic and possibly existential ways than we have reliable evidence about the effectiveness of nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence remains a theory that is fraught with uncertainties and is based on many assumptions. The belief in nuclear deterrence as a guarantee of security should therefore be subject to much more critical scrutiny. In addition, scientific research has the risk of being abstract, which is why it should go together with human stories based on the real experiences of nuclear weapons, such as from hibakusha.”

“With nuclear weapons, we do not have the luxury of waiting for progress on nuclear disarmament until we have a more peaceful world. We must make progress now and this requires us to change the discourse on them as well. Change will come through a much broader international and societal discourse involving informed citizens. Nuclear weapons are an absolutely crucial issue for the survival of humanity. However, proponents of nuclear weapon want to keep this discourse limited to the security expert field, which is simply too limited. Bringing about a much wider discourse across society, including at the city level, is very important to influence decisions and policies at the state level.”

“Understanding nuclear weapons really means understanding what these weapons do when they are used. I am convinced that the deeper citizens understand the catastrophic consequences and the risks of nuclear weapons, the clearer the case for the inevitability of nuclear abolition becomes. We may not like to confront such terrible issues, but I think, with nuclear weapons, it is absolutely crucial.”

“I'm a great fan of Mayors for Peace, their approach and activities. I hope that Mayors for Peace will continue to raise public awareness through various programs such as peace education and influence state-level decisions and policies through a bottom-up approach. I believe that Mayors for Peace's strategy of raising awareness at the citizen level of the devastating effects of nuclear weapons is really crucial. I highly commend the role that the city of Hiroshima and Mayors for Peace have played so far in promoting such peacebuilding efforts, and I look forward to the continued leadership and engagement.”

Next, Vice Chairperson Tani explained the role that Hiroshima should play in supporting the Humanitarian Initiative from the following four perspectives. He then sought the panel's opinions.



Mr. Shiro Tani

1. Embodying the concept of the Humanitarian Initiative

- As explained in the Session with Hibakusha in Part 1, this means conveying the specific details of the “catastrophic humanitarian consequences” of the use of nuclear weapons based on the experiences of the atomic bombed cities. I believe that the deeper citizens understand the specific details of those consequences, the more convinced they will become of the inevitability of abolishing nuclear weapons.
- In April 2026, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum will launch a new exhibition on the inhumanity and devastation of the atomic bombing. We will also post concise videos presenting the consequences on our website and enhance overseas atomic bomb and peace exhibitions.

2. Working hand in hand with peace-loving cities and citizens

- A city with the mission of protecting citizens' lives inevitably moves toward the pursuit of peace. When a war breaks out, it is cities and citizens that suffer, and it is also cities that carry on the memory of the damage and the desire for peace.
- Many cities both in Japan and abroad have empathized with Hiroshima as a symbol of peace and declared their intent to work together with Hiroshima in pursuit of peace.
- Against this background, Mayors for Peace, chaired by the mayor of Hiroshima, has grown into the world's largest peace networks of local governments with 8,500 member cities in 166 countries and regions.
- At a time when suspicion between nations is strong, we have to overcome nationalism and make the human-centered idea of the Humanitarian Initiative a common base of the international community. Peace-loving cities (Mayors for Peace) must take a citizen-centered approach and make bottom-up efforts to build this base.

3. A hub to promote peace education for the younger generation

- Hiroshima has made efforts to preserve exhibits at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, as well as the Atomic Bomb Dome. Grasping the realities of the atomic bombing will make learners conscious of the value of peace, which will be essential as a starting point for peace study. Therefore, Hiroshima intends to continue to

serve as a hub for peace education for the younger generation.

- In the process, we will seek widespread understanding of the inhumanity and catastrophic nature of nuclear weapons.
- In this context, the museum is planning to launch a new peace study exhibition in April 2028.

4. Conveying “Hiroshima's spirit for peace”

- Hibakusha's hope - “no one should ever suffer as we have experienced” - shows Hiroshima's stance of pursuing peace by transcending deep sorrow and hatred based on altruism and tolerance. This idea is the origin and driving force of Hiroshima's peace activities.
- In the sense that it gives meaning to the deaths of the atomic-bomb victims, it represents the restoration of human dignity and also leads to human security.
- Hiroshima must continue to spread this spirit as the cornerstone of world peace and the basis of the Humanitarian Initiative.



Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu

UN Under-Secretary-General Ms. Nakamitsu made remarks as summarized below: “At the United Nations, we value the Humanitarian Initiative so much. The Initiative began to be advocated around 2010 and led to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) after a couple of very important international conferences. In that process, there are three key contributions of this Initiative. First, it reframed the nuclear weapons discourse. It has caused a shift from the conventional state-centric security discourse to more human-centered disarmament discourse, which emphasizes human suffering as a result of these inhumane weapons. Second, these humanitarian approaches strengthen the evidence-based understanding of humanitarian consequences. These data and evidence have been very important contributions to the entire discussions on the nuclear disarmament discourse, and now this is going to be further developed. Third, the Humanitarian Initiative has enabled everyone to understand that the impact of nuclear weapons is not limited to nuclear-weapon states but has a global impact on the survival of humanity. In the current geopolitical tensions, we need to highlight this approach and further develop this discourse.”

“The Humanitarian Initiative is not just in the TPNW context but is often discussed in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly context. So that is why I think it is upon all of us to further develop this Humanitarian Initiative, because it will help us.”

“The UN Secretary-General always receives delegations

from Mayors for Peace whenever they visit New York. Cities are actually closer to citizens and are more directly affected by wars and weapon systems that are so inhumane. For this reason, we need to make sure that we promote the ideas and concepts of coexistence and tolerance. The immediate humane impact of violence and conflict has to be really highlighted. That is why the role of local governments is vital. The United Nations is an intergovernmental platform, and we tend to overlook the roles played by civil societies and local governments. However, cities are vital peace actors. We seek their contributions. We need to make sure that we have what we call multi-stakeholder approaches, where the intergovernmental discussions and negotiations are enriched by those various perspectives.”

“Mayors for Peace, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki are already very important partners of the United Nations. The testimonies of hibakusha have already contributed enormously to the UN discussions. We hope to continue to work with them to promote, for example, peace education.”

“I think that the spirit of Hiroshima is a very unique contribution. Non-Japanese visitors to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum are really impressed that Hiroshima started to be a peace activist instead of taking the path of revenge. The spirit of Hiroshima is a spirit of tolerance and of collectively seeking a more peaceful path based on the belief that they don’t want any other people, any other persons to go through such tragic experiences. It is a very important message to the international community that peace and stability cannot be built on fear or domination. More sustainable peace and security can be achieved through collectively working on addressing many of those differences, fostering cultural understanding, promoting mutual understanding and the concept of shared humanity. I think that the spirit of Hiroshima is about focusing on the similarities and shared humanity, rather than on differences. And it has deeply impressed and inspired the world. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are sending a very powerful message to the world that peace can only be made through empathy, dialogue, and human connections.”



Ms. Melissa Parke

ICAN Executive Director Parke made remarks as summarized below:

“Hibakusha have told their stories again and again so that the world would know the reality of nuclear weapons. They are the true experts on nuclear weapons, and

the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) is a direct outcome of their efforts. This contribution was recognized last year with the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Nihon Hidankyo.” By sharing the stories of hibakusha, we

hope to awaken the global public to the grave and growing threat posed by nuclear weapons and ensure that no one else, young or old, ever suffers the same fate.”

“In addition, ICAN has been working with Hiroshima and Nagasaki to draw public attention to the unique and disproportionate harm that nuclear weapons inflict on children.

Mr. Piromya, Special Advisor to Mayors for Peace, made remarks as summarized below:



Mr. Kasit Piromya

“The cities around the world are working together for peace under the leadership of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Keep on working. We have to work together at the people’s level and at the community level, to bring knowledge about the danger of nuclear weapons to ordinary citizens. The United Nations can definitely come forward in a strong manner to work together with the cities to disseminate the danger of nuclear weapons to the younger generation.”



Dr. Mitsuru Kurosawa

Professor Emeritus Kurosawa made remarks as summarized below:

“I believe that all young students should study peace in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In this regard, the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum makes a very important contribution. Universities should also provide peace education and conduct research aimed at the nuclear issues.” “In the current international society, states are main actors, and nuclear weapon states in particular have great power. I believe that non-state actors, such as the United Nations, NGOs, and cities, should work more strongly and speak up. States are just seeking power, but we are seeking peace and stability based on humanity. We should pursue this kind of world in the longer run. And the non-state actors should work more peacefully without power.”

To conclude the panel discussion, Vice Chairperson Tani stated that based on the abovementioned precious opinions shared during the discussion, Hiroshima’s initiatives should be actively promoted in cooperation with the international community.

(Reference videos)

For understanding the inhumanity of nuclear weapons: 19-minute video



(Peace Culture Planning Division)

Peace Studies for the Younger Generation Initiated Nationwide (Hiroshima Peace Studies Promotion Program)

— Discover a new self through a heartfelt experience in Hiroshima, an atomic-bombed city —

The Hiroshima Peace Studies Promotion Program, comprising the 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering and the 1st Japan Children's Peace Summit, was implemented to provide an opportunity for elementary, junior high, and high school students who were dispatched from across Japan to attend the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6 to deepen their understanding of peace. With the participation of 1,319 children and 489 chaperones from 112 municipalities in 26 prefectures and 546 host staff members, totaling 2,354 participants, the program offered a large-scale and enriching learning opportunity, marking the first step toward promoting peace education for the younger generation on a national scale.

Furthermore, two-thirds of the participating municipalities reported that the culture of peace in their communities has been significantly enhanced through the initiatives and messages shared by the children.

We look forward to welcoming many peace-loving municipalities in FY2026 as well.

The 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering — Peace for Smile, Smile for Peace —

For three days from August 5 to 7, a total of 1,446 participants, including 828 children and 285 chaperones from 72 municipalities in 22 prefectures and 333 Youth Peace Volunteers from 15 municipalities in 5 prefectures who had received training on the realities of the atomic bombing and facilitation techniques, took part in peace studies activities held at seven venues throughout Hiroshima City.

The first part of the event, the "Peace Studies Session," began with Youth Peace Volunteers giving an overview of the damage caused by the atomic bombing. This was followed by a testimony sessions by Mikio Saiki, Yoshiko Kajimoto, Sadae Kasaoka, Teruko Yahata, Kiyomi Kono, Hiroko Kishida, and Shingo Naito at each venue. After sharing their experiences, they responded clearly to various questions from the participants.

In the second part, the "Group Discussion," participants and Youth Peace Volunteers engaged in group discussions over an extended period on two themes: 1) What kind of damage did your hometown suffer during World War II? and 2) What situations today can be considered as lacking

peace, and how do you think they can be resolved?

The survey revealed the following insights regarding the significance of this gathering:



Group discussions at the 1st Japan Children's Peace Studies Gathering

〈Participating children〉

- The program was filled with valuable experiences, and for the first time, I truly understood what it means to wish for peace. It was a meaningful time full of new discoveries and learning.
- It was a great opportunity unlike anything I had experienced before, and it contributed to my personal growth. I want to be one of the people who help create a peaceful world.
- I was reminded that it is up to us to build a peaceful future. I want to participate again and hope this program will continue.
- The words of hibakusha, who are becoming fewer each year, carried tremendous weight. Their heartfelt appeals and cries for peace moved me more deeply than ever before, beyond what I could have imagined. Listening to the tragedies of their families made me realize how fortunate we are to enjoy the things we take for granted. I was also grateful for the opportunity to interact with hibakusha during the Q&A session, where they kindly answered our questions.
- Through the group discussions, I was exposed to diverse opinions that I would not have been aware of on my own, which helped deepen and broaden my thinking. This experience also made me reflect on what happiness truly means.
- I didn't think we would be able to have such discussions, so it was a really good opportunity to realize that we actually can. Although I was nervous about meeting everyone for the first time, the Youth Peace Volunteers facilitated the discussion kindly and carefully, creating a friendly and enjoyable atmosphere. I made many friends, which was

very encouraging.

- I learned that there are many people across the country who share the same wish for peace. I realized that we are all striving for the same goal and united at heart. I believe that we can move closer to achieving peace by addressing small issues, such as eliminating discrimination.

〈Chaperones〉

- I believe that bringing children together from across the country to reflect on peace is valuable and helps build a better future. It was also meaningful for us chaperones, as we learned a lot from the high level of awareness and dedication of the Youth Peace Volunteers in Hiroshima.
- This is an excellent initiative targeting municipalities across the country, and I felt that its driving force was the passion of the Hiroshima staff. I hope it continues in the future.
- The discussions, in which children from all over the country who didn't know each other were well grouped, were excellent. Opportunities to actively discuss and present with peers of the same generation are rare and valuable, fostering independent learning. It was wonderful to see young people listening to one another, observing each other's expressions, and feeling each other's passion throughout the discussions.
- After the event, the children talked with one another about what they had learned and felt, with their eyes sparkling. They said they wanted to start by doing what they could. It was a wonderful and inspiring opportunity for them to experience something authentic.
- Thanks to subsidies from Hiroshima City, the barrier to participation from distant areas has been lowered, making it easier to secure a budget even under tight financial conditions. It also provided a reason to continue the program even in the face of potential downsizing.
- Since a follow-up presentation event is built into the program in advance, the participating children are highly motivated, and the initiative is expected to create a positive ripple effect in their local communities.

〈Youth Peace Volunteers〉

- It was a truly rewarding volunteer experience, where I was able to share a message of peace across Japan, improve my communication skills, and make friends from various regions. My perspective on peace has changed dramatically, and the range of my activities has broadened. It was a wonderful summer.

- As this year marks the 80th anniversary of the end of World War II, I was able to share with my fellow volunteers a strong determination to not let the memory of the war fade away. I had meaningful discussions with like-minded people. I realized the importance of cooperation and how each person's small actions can lead to a great impact.
- All the pre-event training sessions were enjoyable, and my passion for peace and motivation for the real event gradually grew. I gained many new ideas and pieces of knowledge that I had never thought of before. The training sessions gave me confidence, and during the actual group discussions, I was able to engage in meaningful and fulfilling conversations, which left me with a great sense of satisfaction.
- It was a valuable experience that helped me change. I was surprised by how much I had grown, as I was able to start conversations and share topics during the main event, which I couldn't do at first. I learned many things that I couldn't learn at school, such as the importance of looking at things from different perspectives and how to create a positive atmosphere among people I don't know. I believe these skills will be useful in my future school life as well as in many everyday situations.
- Participants from other regions had conducted thorough research beforehand and gave clear, easy-to-understand presentations, which allowed me to learn that every region across the country had suffered its own war damage.
- I would like to continue participating in the program. Hopefully, I would like to engage in peace activities, such as having discussions with young people from overseas and guiding them.

The 1st Japan Children's Peace Summit

— Peace for Smile, Smile for Peace —

After the ceremony on August 6, the summit was held at the Phoenix Hall of the International Conference Center Hiroshima, with the participation of 708 children and 281 chaperones from 63 municipalities in 19 prefectures and 213 staff members from Hiroshima, totaling 1,202 participants.

At the opening, Izumi Nakamitsu, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, greeted the participants and encouraged them to reflect on three questions: "What is peace?" "How can we create peace?" and "What can you do?" Following this, students from Hiroshima Special Needs High School

sang the song “Itsumademo (Forever)” while projecting messages of peace on the screen, marking the start of the summit.

In the first part, “Learning about the Atomic Bomb Experience,” participants first watched a virtual reality video simulating the atomic bombing and postwar reconstruction in Hiroshima. Afterward, Fumiaki Kajiya shared his hibakusha testimony and answered participants’ questions. Then, after listening to poems by volunteer readers, all participants read aloud the atomic bomb poem “Genshi Baku-dan (The Atomic Bomb)”.

In the second part, “Passing on the Baton of Peace (Presentations on Efforts for Peace),” eight groups gave presentations and shared their thoughts on peace. These included reports on the activities of the Kitahiroshima City Children’s Ambassadors (Hokkaido), Ichihara City Peace Ambassadors (Chiba), and Ishigaki City Peace Ambassadors (Okinawa), as well as initiatives to eliminate bullying in Okaya City (Nagano) and peace and community contribution activities by students from Hiroshima City and Nagasaki City. The survey revealed the following insights regarding the significance of the summit:



Scene from the presentations at the 1st Children's Peace Summit

〈Participating children〉

- It was a memorable program that will have a significant impact on my future. I thought that our actions could help sustain a peaceful society. I also felt that we need to think about what we should do and what we can do to move forward.
- I’m really glad I was able to participate. Watching a VR video and listening to a hibakusha’s testimony deepened my understanding of the atomic bomb and war. I was able to experience an atmosphere that can only be felt on site, making it a wonderful and valuable experience that deeply touched my heart.
- It was very meaningful to hear from people in various positions, such as hibakusha, poem readers, and children,

each sharing their own perspectives. I’m glad I could share my thoughts with children from across the country.

- The choir was a delight to listen to.
- The hibakusha’s stories truly made me realize what had really happened in Hiroshima. I understood the many hardships he went through. Each story stayed with me, and I have become more grateful for the everyday life I have.
- The readers’ words were powerful, and when we read a poem aloud ourselves, we became filled with emotion and could empathize with the writer. The scenes vividly came to mind and resonated deeply with me. I felt that we must convey the message of peace more strongly.
- I was able to hear about the efforts toward peace in different regions and compare them with those in my own. It was a great opportunity to hear the opinions of people my age, and I was amazed at how proactive they were about peace. I thought it would be wonderful if we could do the same.

〈Chaperones〉

- This was the first summit under the new name, and it was really great. I hope it becomes a place where we can explore the value of peace together with the younger generation, who have open minds. The summit encouraged us to remember the reality of the atomic bombing, face it fully, and reflect on what we can do and how we should act in the present and for the future. I hope that such activities will spread further.
- The heat in Hiroshima, the city that suffered the atomic bombing, around August 6 is something that can never be experienced anywhere else, except in Nagasaki, making it very educational and stimulating. I believe continuing this event carries great significance for peace.
- It was also a valuable learning opportunity for the chaperones to reflect on war and peace. The children’s serious expressions and candid questions, such as “What can we do to preserve the peace we have today?” provided many insights for the adults as well.

(Reference videos)



Digest version



Regular version



Youth Peace Volunteer version

(Peace Studies Division)

Launch of the 1st Japan Teachers' Meeting on Peace Studies

Guided by Sadako Kurihara's words on school trips to Hiroshima, "In the beginning, there are teachers. If teachers approach their students with genuine human feeling, the students will respond with sparks of inspiration," the first Japan Teachers' Meeting on Peace Studies was held over two days, August 21 and 22.



Group discussions among teachers from the Kanto region and Hiroshima

The participants included 21 principals and teachers in charge from Tokyo, Ibaraki, and Chiba; 11 teachers involved in peace studies from Hiroshima City; supervisors from the Hiroshima City Board of Education; and faculty members from the School of Education at Hiroshima University. They took part in group discussions on peace studies and experienced a variety of peace studies programs in Hiroshima.

At the beginning of the first day, Fumiaki Kajiya, a former elementary school principal, shared his testimony as a hibakusha. Participant remarks included "Every word carried weight" and "I felt the overwhelming reality that only someone who lived through that time could convey."

In the presentations on peace study initiatives, Tsukuda Junior High School in Chuo Ward shared their inter-school exchange with Koi Junior High School in Hiroshima City, conducted both online and on-site. Onarimon Elementary and Junior High Schools in Minato Ward presented on the process they went through in deciding to take a school excursion to Hiroshima.

In the group discussions, teachers from the Kanto region and Hiroshima were divided into groups of about four and actively discussed two themes related to school trips to Hiroshima: (1) perspectives and initiatives for enhancing the quality of on-site learning in Hiroshima (what on-site learning in Hiroshima should be like) and (2) how pre- and post-excursion learning can be connected to on-site

learning in Hiroshima and further developed into school-wide activities. In one group, teachers exchanged opinions about practical examples. A teacher from the Kanto region said, "To help children think about peace as something that concerns them personally, we encourage them to develop assignments connected to their own lives and experiences." A teacher from Hiroshima said, "Rather than asking children to think about peace right away, we have them start by researching topics they are interested in, such as the Carp baseball team, which eventually leads them to Hiroshima 80 years ago." In another group, when asked by a teacher from Hiroshima, "Why do you go on a school excursion to Hiroshima?" participants responded with answers such as "Because it is a place affected by nuclear weapons, which still exist in the world and could potentially be used today" and "Because it is a place where atomic bomb heritage sites remain visible throughout the city." In the subsequent general presentation, the "Hiroshima Peace Note" created by Hiroshima City received high praise, with participants expressing a desire to use it as teaching material (in the Kanto region as well). Many participants commented that they wished they had more time for discussion.

On the second day, the program focused on learning about the realities of the atomic bombing, including visits to the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and the Honkawa Elementary School Peace Museum, tours of memorial monuments, and a poem reading experience. During these activities, participants listened intently to accounts such as the reasons why so many junior high school students lost their lives and the story of the only surviving student at Honkawa Elementary School. A participant commented, "I was also able to appreciate the volunteers' intentions. I was deeply moved to see each of them learning, reflecting, and carefully conveying their messages."



Participants from the Kanto region, together with Tamaki Okuhara, former principal of Honkawa Elementary School (far left), and staff from the HPCF

In FY2026, the program will be expanded to cover 414 public junior high schools in Kanagawa Prefecture, with plans to further enhance its content. The costs will be covered by the Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation (HPCF), and we warmly invite schools and teachers interested in peace studies to participate.

《Participants' feedback》

- It was a highly fulfilling and educational training session. I was reminded of the importance of visiting Hiroshima or Nagasaki during one's formative periods. I also learned the value of gradually deepening peace studies over the three years of junior high school. I hope Hiroshima will more widely promote the significance of these initiatives.
- I felt that peace education is deeply rooted in Hiroshima's schools and that teachers there demonstrate a strong sense of awareness and passion. It was especially rewarding to see young teachers enthusiastically promoting peace studies. I would also like to learn more about the theories of peace studies by the professor from the School of Education at Hiroshima University.
- The Peace Volunteers' explanations were very easy to understand. I would like to include similar activities in school excursions as well. The inter-school exchanges were also particularly impressive. I would like to learn more about the monitor school system.
- I was initially worried about whether it was appropriate for someone like me, who knew very little about peace studies, to participate, but the people of Hiroshima welcomed me very warmly. Interacting with such passionate teachers not only strengthened my motivation but also deepened my knowledge, making me even more determined to plan and implement school excursions to Hiroshima.
- The program was wonderful, and I feel that even more people will participate in the future. I will encourage my fellow teachers to participate (in this teachers' meeting), and I also hope that the number of school trips to Hiroshima from the Kanto region will increase, even a little, so that we can pass on the stories of Hiroshima and the message of peace to future generations of students.



“Teachers from the Kanto Region Invited to Hiroshima, the Atomic-bombed City, to Discuss the Role of Peace Studies in School Trips” (TSS News)

(Peace Studies Division)

Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb and Peace Photo Poster Exhibition Held at the United Nations University

To commemorate the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings, the *Hiroshima-Nagasaki Atomic Bomb and Peace Photo Poster Exhibition* was held at the United Nations University in Shibuya, Tokyo, from July 11 to August 17, attracting approximately 1,200 visitors.

The opening ceremony was attended by Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui, Nagasaki Mayor Shiro Suzuki, United Nations University Rector Tshilidzi Marwala, former Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, and ambassadors to Japan. They listened to a testimony by Seiichiro Mise, who was exposed to the atomic bomb in Nagasaki at the age of 10.



Opening ceremony at the United Nations University
(Photo: Courtesy of the United Nations University)

Displayed were photographic posters showing the devastation caused by the atomic bombings, as well as those related to Sadako Sasaki. People of various ages and nationalities visited the exhibition, where atomic-bomb legacy successors provided explanations of the exhibits. The event also offered visitors the opportunity to experience the impact of atomic bombings through VR goggles, as well as an AI-based device simulating dialogues with hibakusha.

Visitors commented, among other things, “Holding an atomic bomb exhibition in Tokyo is highly significant” and “While photographs, posters, and texts are necessary, the VR experience made it feel more real, almost as if it were my own experience.”

The exhibition also provided a valuable opportunity for Mayors for Peace and the United Nations University to establish a collaborative framework.

(Peace Culture Planning Division)