

Nagasaki Appeal

Standing on the threshold of a new century, we concerned global citizens have gathered from throughout the world in Nagasaki, the last city of the departing century to suffer the devastation of a nuclear attack.

Some half-century ago, humanity embarked on the development of nuclear weapons. These indescribably destructive instruments are capable not only of robbing millions of people of their lives at a single stroke, but also of inflicting lifelong physical and mental anguish on any survivors. The damage resulting from the use of nuclear weapons would extend far beyond the boundaries of the belligerents, having extremely serious consequences for the environment and all living things. Nevertheless, these criminal weapons are still being used by some states for political purposes.

It is our duty to provide a worthy response to the voices of the hibakusha -- the atomic bomb survivors; voices tinged with anxiety stemming from the knowledge that death from not yet fully explained causes may come at any time; voices that say, "Such a tragedy cannot be allowed to be repeated... Before the last of us leaves this world, nuclear weapons must be abolished forever." It is the sincere desire of the citizens of Nagasaki, that Nagasaki should remain the last city to suffer the calamity of the dropping of an atomic bomb.

Despite the fact that it has been over a decade since the collapse of the Cold War standoff, there are still over 30,000 nuclear warheads in existence on our fragile planet. The United States and the Russian Federation each continue to maintain several thousand nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert.

The International Court of Justice, the world's supreme legal authority, has ruled that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is a violation of international law. These weapons, which are even more inhumane than biological or chemical weapons, are nonetheless claimed by the few governments which possess them, and by the countries sheltered by the "nuclear umbrella," as necessary for their security.

Expectations were raised in May of this year at the 2000 NPT Review Conference when the nuclear weapon states agreed to an "an unequivocal undertaking... to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals..." However, the phrase, "undertake to engage in an accelerated process of negotiations," had to be eliminated from the draft document in order to avoid the breakdown of the talks.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons poses a threat to all of humanity, and their use would have catastrophic consequences. The only defense against nuclear catastrophe is the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

During our conference, we have learned from the stories of many who have suffered from the nuclear age: the hibakusha and downwinders from Hiroshima and Nagasaki; Semipalatinsk, Nevada, and Moruroa; Chernobyl and Tokaimura. The world's citizens must now be mobilized to form a potent global movement, and it is this force that will compel governments to fulfill their promises. All sectors of the global community must be involved including women, youth, workers, religious communities and indigenous peoples.

Having concluded four days of discussions in Nagasaki, the concerned global citizens who attended this historic Assembly call for the following actions:

1. Let the citizens of the world cooperate with like-minded nations in calling for an international conference to negotiate a verifiable treaty for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

2. The responsibility and the potential role of the Japanese government in the context of the elimination of nuclear weapons is extremely great. We strongly expect Japan to end its dependence on nuclear weapons for national security, and to maximize its contribution to nuclear abolition, for instance, by working towards the establishment of a Northeast Asia nuclear weapon-free zone. We ask the citizens of the world to provide support to the activities of the Japanese people in pressuring their government.

3. The missile defense programs proposed by the United States for North America and East Asia is preventing nuclear disarmament, and threatening to ignite a new arms race. The current situation must be urgently improved. Let us join hands with US citizens who are calling for the cessation of all missile defense programs, and work for stronger international public opinion on this subject.

4. All governments should inform their publics about the damage caused by nuclear activities. We call for the reallocation of the resources currently expended on nuclear arms to mitigate and compensate for the human suffering and environmental damage caused by the use of nuclear weapons and the entire process of nuclear development, including uranium mining, reprocessing, testing, and manufacture. Resources should also be provided for the elimination of nuclear weapons and its verification.

5. We also call for efforts directed toward the stepwise and parallel implementation of various measures, such as the entry-into-force as soon as possible of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty; a total ban on sub-critical and all other forms of nuclear weapons testing; the cut-off and international control of weapons-usable fissile materials; deep reductions of nuclear arsenals; de-alerting; the adoption of no-first-use policies among nuclear weapons states and non-use policies against non-nuclear weapons states; withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from foreign soil and international waters; the establishment of new nuclear weapon-free zones and the strengthening of existing zones; and official rejection of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. Further, we urgently call for the cessation of nuclear weapons programs by India and Pakistan. Let us use every available opportunity to express the expectations and demands of the world's citizens.

Activities aimed at the elimination of nuclear weapons, led by the hibakusha, Abolition 2000 and others, have progressed to the point where "nuclear weapons abolition" has become part of the common vocabulary of international politics and diplomacy. So long as the efforts of the world's citizens continue, there is bright hope that our objectives will be achieved. The myriad small steps taken by concerned citizens in every conceivable setting will no doubt lead to new and giant strides forward. Let us begin renewed and concerted action directed at the rapid realization of a 21st century free of war, in which the scourge of nuclear weapons is finally removed forever.

The Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
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