

2026 Hiroshima Global Youth Forum

Hiroshima Declaration

August 19, 2026

Preamble

We, the 84 students from 25 different countries, have come together at the 2026 Hiroshima Global Youth Forum, held from August 15th to 19th 2026, across different cultures, religions, and experiences, with a shared goal: to advance the abolition of nuclear weapons and build a peaceful world.

Our backgrounds and perspectives are different, but this is what allows us to listen, learn, and understand one another. Dialogue is the first step toward lasting peace.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki show us the devastation of nuclear weapons. Humans who were killed, *hibakusha*, survivors of the atomic bombs, and individuals who were changed by the bombings are not just statistics. Behind them are lives and histories, with relationships, dreams, hopes, and traumas down the line. *Hibakusha* testimonies and the fact that atomic bombs were used are enduring warnings and responsibilities passed to our generation.

Hiroshima and Nagasaki suffered unimaginable destruction; however, they rebuilt themselves and continue to send a message of peace to the world. Their experiences show that humans should choose dialogue over destruction, cooperation over domination, and responsibility over indifference.

Our generation has inherited a world in which nuclear weapons are still defended as instruments of security, status, and political power. Yet peace based on the threat of destruction is fragile. Conflicts, accidents, misunderstandings, miscalculations, or technological failures could turn that threat into a catastrophe.

War robs children of their human rights. People in the world should be able to inherit hope, dignity, and the ability to build peace, not fear and weapons.

A world free of nuclear weapons is difficult, but achievable. As *hibakusha* remind us, “No one else should ever suffer as we have.” We carry that message forward as our promise to future generations.

We seek not an absence of disagreement, but a world where disagreement never escalates to violence. A step towards abolishing nuclear weapons is what helps to achieve this.

1. Challenges to the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

Nuclear abolition is blocked by interlocking problems of fear, mistrust, power, military competition, unequal rules, and growing distance from the human reality of nuclear weapons.

1.1 Nuclear Deterrence, Risk, and Uncertainty

A central obstacle to nuclear abolition is the continuing reliance on nuclear deterrence. Nuclear deterrence seeks to prevent attacks by convincing an adversary that the costs would be unacceptable. Yet for deterrence to work, the other party should also believe that nuclear weapons might actually be used, which is difficult without mutual understanding.

It is difficult to know with certainty how far nuclear deterrence has prevented war. At the same time, the possibility of nuclear use cannot be completely ruled out—whether through deliberate decision, accident, misunderstanding, miscalculation, technological failure, or escalation during a crisis. Reliance on nuclear deterrence, therefore, carries serious risks and uncertainty.

1.2 Power, Status, Arms-Race Dynamics, and the Security Dilemma

Nuclear weapons are not treated only as military tools. They can also be seen as symbols of power, international status, and political influence. Some governments, including umbrella states, see them as protection against domination or as a way to preserve military advantage. Long-standing conflicts, territorial disputes, strategic rivalry, and unresolved security concerns can further reinforce dependence on nuclear weapons.

At the same time, nuclear-armed countries continue to modernize or strengthen their arsenals. When one state strengthens its nuclear forces to increase its own security, others may feel less secure and respond by strengthening their own forces. This “security dilemma” deepens mistrust and arms competition, making it even more difficult for states to give up nuclear weapons.

Artificial intelligence (AI), cyber technologies, and other emerging technologies can add further complexity and sophistication to nuclear forces. These technologies may increase the risks of miscalculation and escalation.

1.3 Mistrust, Verification, and Unequal International Rules

Disarmament is difficult when there is a lack of mutual trust. Verifying warhead dismantlement and accounting for weapon-usable nuclear material are complex procedures, especially as governments also need to protect sensitive information. States may fear that others will conceal capabilities or fail to fulfill commitments.

International treaties and institutions have created important rules and obligations, but political disputes and conflict of interests slow progress. When international rules appear to be applied unequally, such as when powerful states seem to enjoy privileges or escape standards expected of others, trust in international law and institutions can suffer.

Repeated negotiations with few visible results can weaken confidence that diplomacy and international institutions can change the status quo.

1.4 Apathy, Distance, and the Fading Human Reality

More than eight decades have passed since nuclear weapons were used in war. As the number of *hibakusha* able to give direct testimony declines, the human consequences of nuclear weapons can feel increasingly distant to newer generations. Nuclear weapons may become an issue of the past.

Peace education can reinforce this distance if it focuses mainly on dates, facts, tragedies, or ceremonies without connecting the past to today's government policies and our choices.

As nuclear weapons become perceived as more necessary as a permanent or unavoidable part of international security, people may stop challenging their existence or imagining alternatives. Temporal distance, apathy, and resignation can therefore help the nuclear status quo continue.

2. Recommendations for Global Action Toward the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

No government, institution, or generation can overcome these barriers alone; progress requires coordinated and equitable action that reduces nuclear risks while making security more cooperative, verifiable, and human-centric .

2.1 Build Security through Dialogue and Cooperation

We call on governments to sustain dialogue, reduce tensions, respect international law, and prioritize diplomacy over escalation. Governments should acknowledge that the power imbalance between nuclear states and non-nuclear states must be overcome and eventually broken down in order to push for nuclear abolition.

Nuclear-armed states and umbrella states as a collective should continually reduce the role of nuclear weapons in their political and military strategies. They should cooperate with non-nuclear states and international organizations to strengthen conflict prevention, diplomacy, arms control, international cooperation, human security, and defense consistent with international law.

Disarmament should reduce fear and improve security for all. International institutions should help countries with different security views and discuss their concerns without giving priority to certain countries over others.

2.2 Make Disarmament Verifiable, Fair, and Accountable

Governments should negotiate equitable, concrete, and time-bound disarmament steps. International organizations and technical experts should also develop impartial methods for verifying agreed measures to ensure the transparency of nuclear activities for all countries.

States parties should fulfill their obligations and commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). States should also pursue further arms-control and disarmament agreements, support nuclear-weapon-free zones, and engage constructively with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). These treaties should be implemented continually and consistently so that further goals are reached over time. States should also eventually agree to binding consequences that will be imposed upon them if they do not comply with these treaties.

Rules should be applied consistently, with strict and clear procedures for addressing non-compliance and paths back to cooperation. Penalties for non-compliance, such as sanctions or embargos, should be imposed as a global collective overseen by international institutions in order to incentivize nuclear states to comply. Treaty processes should also be made accessible to civil society and young people to involve everyone in the discussion.

2.3 Make Peace Education Relevant to the Present

Schools should teach not only the history of nuclear weapons, but also current nuclear policies and non-violent conflict resolution. Schools should also incorporate opportunities to hear the stories of *hibakusha* through interactive activities to promote discussions around issues surrounding nuclear weapons.

Students should be facilitated and encouraged to ask difficult questions: Why do countries still rely on nuclear weapons? Who bears the human cost of political decisions? What alternatives could make people safer? They should encounter different perspectives, examine all arguments for nuclear deterrence and its risks, and develop critical thinking. It is not only about accepting information, but also about understanding their role as active citizens and developing the confidence to contribute to peacebuilding in their communities and beyond.

Peace education should connect Hiroshima and Nagasaki with the experiences of communities affected by nuclear testing, weapons production, and other nuclear-weapons-related activities, as well as with broader histories of war and armed conflict. It should recognize suffering regardless of background by presenting personal testimonies and physical artifacts, and encourage young people to discuss not only what happened, but what we should do next to build a peaceful future.

2.4 Mobilize Society, Resources, and Technology for Peace

Governments cannot create change alone. Civil society, journalists, schools, universities, businesses, scientists, investors, artists, and citizens all have a role. The cooperation of these different groups can create a movement strong enough to change the status quo.

People can raise awareness, share reliable information, build a movement, support independent journalism, vote when eligible, and ask leaders to explain their policies. These small actions can change how someone sees the issue and, when amplified, become political power. Although this change starts slowly, it causes a ripple effect that can create real change in the world.

Businesses, universities, activist groups, investors, and other eligible groups should examine whether their activities support nuclear-weapons programs and make responsible choices, or risk facing backlash and legal liability.

Scientists and technology companies should develop emerging technologies to support and facilitate verification, education, communication, and risk reduction that strengthen meaningful human control over decisions involving catastrophic weapons.

2.5 Put Human Dignity at the Center of Security

Security policy should ultimately be judged by whether it protects human life and dignity. The human dignity in question is the quality of being worthy of honor and respect because you are human regardless of other qualities. Behind every nuclear decision are lives, relationships, futures, and hopes.

The international community should support survivors and communities affected by nuclear-weapons-related activities through international humanitarian frameworks, including legally binding ones, financial and technical aid, and environmental cleanup. The international community should also address environmental harm, displacement, discrimination, and other unequal burdens. The international community must do all of the above for the sake of respecting all the victims, protecting their dignity, and calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons to the world.

Security must protect the many vulnerable actors in the case of war. Everyone is vulnerable: children detrimentally affected by traumatic experiences; indigenous peoples displaced for the sake of nuclear testing; and many more. Thus, there is further importance in pushing for nuclear disarmament.

3. The Role of Hiroshima in the Abolition of Nuclear Weapons

Hiroshima has a leading role in connecting the actual terror of nuclear war with memory, education, dialogue, and action for a world without nuclear weapons.

3.1 Hiroshima's Historical Experience and Responsibility

The atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945 caused catastrophic human suffering, while the city's reconstruction and continuing peace activities have kept that experience connected to questions about war, security, and the future.

Casualty figures alone cannot express the strain on Hiroshima. Those who were killed and those who survived were individuals with families, dreams, and futures. For decades after the bombing, *hibakusha* have been living with severe physical, psychological, and social consequences, such as marginalization, while enduring heightened rates of diseases caused by prolonged radiation exposure.

Hiroshima's influence does not come from political or military power, but from its peaceful stance over resentment and from voices that continue to tell the world what nuclear weapons can do to human beings. It urges us to see the profound human pain, honoring the victims with the deep empathy, dignity, and remembrance they deserve.

3.2 Preserving and Transmitting Memory and Evidence

Hibakusha testimonies, photographs, documents, personal belongings, cenotaphs, the Atomic Bomb Dome, Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, and other resources allow future generations to encounter the evidence for themselves.

As opportunities to hear first-hand testimony decrease, multilingual archives, films, exhibitions, recordings, and digital resources can widen access. For example, implementing interactive AI technologies and virtual experiences can allow future generations to engage in conversations with *hibakusha*.

Technology should support rather than replace direct engagement with people, places, and evidence, while protecting accuracy, consent, authenticity, and dignity.

3.3 Hiroshima as a Place for Dialogue and Cooperation

Hiroshima can bring together *hibakusha*, young people, citizens, experts, policymakers, and international organizations with different perspectives.

Because nuclear abolition involves humanitarian, security, and technical questions, Hiroshima can provide a place to discuss nuclear risk, arms control, verification, international law, and paths toward disarmament. Its role is not to claim moral authority over others, but to create spaces for people with different experiences and views to listen, question assumptions, and work together.

3.4 Hiroshima as a Center for Peace Education and Youth Participation

Hiroshima can help young people to connect nuclear history with present challenges and to consider what responsibilities they carry forward.

Multilingual materials, digital learning, international exchanges, the voice of second- and third-generation *hibakusha*, and partnerships with schools, universities, cities, and communities can extend these opportunities beyond those able to visit Hiroshima.

3.5 From Remembrance to Responsibility

Hiroshima's experience raises a question for the present: What do we do with what we now know? Knowledge of history does not automatically lead to peace. By encouraging people to reflect on present choices and their own role in building peace, Hiroshima can help humanity as a whole to turn memory into responsibility, and responsibility into action.

4. Our Commitment as the Young Generation

We may not yet hold the most powerful positions in society, but we already have the ability to learn, speak, connect, create, and act—and we accept responsibility for how we use those abilities.

4.1 Learn, Question, and Remember

We commit to learning about the humanitarian, historical, political, technical, environmental, and social dimensions of nuclear weapons even when a world without nuclear weapons becomes a reality. We will observe international developments and listen to different perspectives, including those of countries that rely on nuclear weapons and countries that do not. We will verify our knowledge and challenge misinformation by sharing accurate information with our friends, families, schools, and communities.

We will not treat nuclear abolition as a problem already solved, too distant to matter, or too complicated for young people. It is of great importance that children and youth get a proper education on the history of the world and present-day issues, considering the fact that they are the future.

We will learn from *hibakusha*, other survivors, peacebuilders, and affected communities and help pass on their words, stories, and memories to people in modern society and future generations.

We will also strive to define, scientifically, not just abstractly, what is considered "dangerous".

Knowledge must not end with absorption. It must lead us to think, question, and act in order to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. It is fundamental to keep learning with the clear purpose of creating a peaceful world.

4.2 Speak, Share, and Participate

We will use conversation, social media, art, writing, school activities, and community events to keep nuclear weapons from becoming a forgotten issue.

We will use the civic and political opportunities available to us: organizing, signing petitions, supporting independent journalism, joining peaceful civic action, voting when eligible, and questioning leaders about their nuclear policies. Having listened to *hibakusha*'s testimonies and having seen the reality of the atomic bombings' tragedies, we will use these experiences to make our message more impactful.

Young people should have a meaningful place in international conferences and treaty processes. We claim not only a place in the audience, but a place in the conversation.

4.3 Build Solidarity Across Borders and Differences

We will build friendships and networks across countries, cultures, religions, generations, and political views. We will listen with kindness and learn from people whose experiences differ from our own.

We will begin in our own communities, join exchanges and collaborative projects, and connect nuclear abolition with human rights, environmental justice, indigenous rights, peace education, and non-violent conflict resolution. Also, like Greta Thunberg, a young humanitarian and human rights activist, we must continue to demand peaceful agreements from governments around the world.

A united movement does not require everyone to share the same history or opinion. It requires respect, dialogue, and a shared determination to protect human life.

4.4 Put Peace into Everyday and Professional Life

We will practice non-violence, empathy, dialogue, and respect in everyday life. As we enter universities, workplaces, and professions, we will consider how our work, financial choices, and decisions affect others. We will also avoid funding the companies which develop or finance nuclear weapons. By ethically engaging in our everyday lives, we can strengthen our determination to follow our morals when national security conflicts with human dignity.

We will stand with people affected by war, conflict, oppression, poverty, and nuclear harm. Peace is not only a government policy; it is also a way of treating people and a responsibility we carry into our communities and institutions. We will not ignore suffering just because it happens far away from us. We will strive to understand the experiences of others and support those affected by war, conflict, and nuclear harm.

4.5 Start Now, and Keep Going

We will not leave the responsibility of carrying out the process of nuclear abolition only to politicians, experts, or future generations.

We do not need perfect knowledge before beginning to act. A first step can be reading a testimony, asking a question, attending an event, signing a petition, talking with someone who disagrees with us, or sharing reliable information.

One action may seem small, but many small actions can become a force that governments and societies cannot ignore. As the famous American anthropologist Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” Progress may be slow, but that is not a reason to wait. We will start acting individually, in our communities, and together across borders.

We will transform historical memory into present responsibility, and present responsibility into lifelong action.

5. Our Message to the World

Our message is a united voice, a hope for change, and an opportunity to see a world that lives in peace.

Nuclear weapons do not create genuine security. They create fear and a continuing risk of catastrophic destruction. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as other areas affected by the use, production, and testing of nuclear weapons, remind us that this danger is not abstract or safely confined to history.

What humanity has created, humanity can dismantle. We can learn from the past, never to repeat the same mistake again. A world free of nuclear weapons is achievable. Reaching it will require trust, courage, cooperation, and sustained action.

We call upon governments to replace nuclear threats with diplomacy and pursue practical, verifiable disarmament. International organizations should apply rules fairly and support dialogue. We encourage businesses, scientists, educators, media, and civil society to ensure that their knowledge, resources, and influence serve life rather than mass destruction.

Resources that countries allocate towards nuclear weapons should be aimed towards other sectors such as poverty resolution or education.

We call upon people around the world to use their voices, learn, question, create, and act. You do not need a big reason to start. You can start with little actions: even a simple conversation can help another person understand why abolition concerns us all.

We, the young generation, will carry forward the stories of victims and survivors, as we are the last generation to directly hear from the atomic bomb survivors; if we wish for future generations to learn from history, prioritizing the integrity of information and passing down the realities are essential. Challenging the normalization of nuclear weapons, connecting our voices, and acting locally matters significantly.

We collectively refuse nuclear weapons as a permanent part of our world. We will remember our shared humanity and refuse to let political labels erase the dignity we share.

Humanity could continue the cycle of fear and rivalry, or build security through understanding, international law, justice, and cooperation. The choice begins with each of us, and the responsibility belongs to all of us.

Who creates and protects peace? Not only politicians or diplomats, but every single person carries the responsibility. We desire to see a world free of nuclear weapons, where we can all come together in harmony.

To start a new page and establish trust, people should be aware of history without holding past negative events against others.

We choose peace. We choose dialogue. We choose human dignity. Our single voice can make a change, and our combined voice can shape the future.