

Hiroshima Junior International Forum 2018

Hiroshima Declaration

<Preamble>

We, the peace-loving participants of the Hiroshima Junior International Forum from 33 countries and regions, gathered here in Hiroshima from August 19th to August 21st 2018. Our purpose was and still is to learn the initiatives for the abolition of nuclear weapons, reconstruction and peacebuilding. Our mission is to share each other's experiences and ideas and to discuss and agree upon what we can do for world peace.

Considering the recent developments with regard to nuclear disarmament, we recognize there are both positive and negative dimensions. As far as nuclear disarmament is concerned, in 2017 the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (NWBT) was passed. The efforts of civil society to abolish nuclear weapons culminated in awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to ICAN (International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons). In addition to this, two historical summits took place this year; the summit between North and South Korea in April and in June the United States and North Korea Summit held in Singapore. At both of these summits, strong pledges towards denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula were declared. However, because of the disagreement on the way to achieve abolishment of nuclear weapons, a huge gap was created in the attitudes towards the NWBT between Nuclear-Weapon States (NWSs) and Non-Nuclear-Weapon States (NNWSs). Moreover, no one can be sure that the process of denuclearization of North Korea would proceed immediately and smoothly.

It almost goes without saying that the future of the world is unclear and to some extent ambiguous. But that is why we, as representatives of the youth today, should never cease to learn, discuss and pursue ways to build a better world.

Hiroshima, the place we met, has a special history and legacy and served to greatly inspire us. To overcome the difficulties we face, and to encourage the next generation to follow us, it is our responsibility to inform the community of Hiroshima and beyond what we have learned and discussed in our time here.

<Abolition of Nuclear Weapons>

First, we considered the issues related to the abolition of nuclear weapons.

1. The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has an inbuilt inequality in terms of possession of nuclear weapons because it classifies state members to the Treaty into two groups: NWSs and NNWSs. Although they do not possess nuclear weapons, some of the NNWSs have relied on the nuclear umbrella provided by NWSs. This has led to the creation of a gap between the stances of NWSs and NNWSs but also even among NNWSs towards the NWBT. We strongly recommend to arrange or call on another summit for all NWSs to renounce nuclear weapons. Besides NWSs and their allied NNWSs should change their mindset and recognize inhuman nature of

nuclear weapons. Japan also should play a crucial role in building bridges between NWSs and NNWSs.

2. Due to the lack of trust in the abolition of nuclear weapons, there are still many nuclear weapons around the world, especially in the United States and Russia. Despite the fact that NWSs recognize the need of nuclear disarmament, they still fall into a security dilemma and they cannot actualize it. Likewise, certain NNWSs never gave up their nuclear programs in pursuit of national defense. Indeed, the issue of North Korea's nuclear development has become a major security threat not only to the neighboring countries but also to the rest of the world.

In order to solve these complex security problems, we believe that state leaders and ordinary citizens need to improve the mutual trust and develop relationships based on that trust between countries. In particular, for those purposes, it is necessary to hold regular meetings so that each state can exchange their opinions freely and openly and develop mutual understandings regarding security issues. In addition, the mass media and social media should be utilized responsibly to increase awareness of the abolition of nuclear weapons, and efforts should be made to ease mutual distrust among countries.

3. In addition, we cannot turn our eyes away from the environmental effect of nuclear weapons. Nuclear waste created in the production of nuclear weapons has already been piled up and poses a potentially disastrous radioactive danger to the environment. Needless to say, there would be a catastrophic impact on a massive scale around the world, once the weapons were used. The consequences would be beyond words. There would be a huge burden on food production among other things because of the long-lasting radiation, which could result in causing devastating poverty around the world.

We strongly believe that testing, producing and using nuclear weapons needs to be prohibited because of these environmental reasons as well. The long-term effect of radiation on human bodies and environment cannot be ignored. We urge the international community to fund and invest in scientific research on how to properly dispose nuclear waste. We cannot leave this huge burden to the next generation.

<Reconstruction and Peacebuilding>

Secondly, we considered the issues related to peacebuilding.

1. Peacebuilding and poverty reduction are two halves of the same coin. Globally, more than 800 million people are still living on less than USD 1.9 a day. While poverty eradication remains one of the challenges, growing economic inequality within a state is also emerging as a new challenge for both developing and developed countries. Poverty arising from these inequalities is often named as one of the root causes of terrorism. Furthermore, increasing military spending by states as reported in the media could be used in other sectors such as education and public health.

To overcome the poverty, we need to share responsibilities within the international community and show continued support toward the countries in need. For instance, Japan, one of the most developed countries, achieved its development with the assistance from the international community after the Second World War. In a similar manner, assistance should be provided by the international community as a whole – not only on the state-level but also from civil society as well. The United Nations should encourage its member states to provide this assistance. We also believe that NWSs particularly should provide assistance to countries which have suffered from nuclear testing.

2. Today, discrimination and prejudice within a country – over race, gender, religion and culture – is causing a lack of trust and misunderstanding among people worldwide. Education systems have not worked very well to teach us the seriousness of these issues. These negative attitudes create a sense of injustice, which result in keeping people disadvantaged socially, politically and economically. This lack of trust nurtures a culture of violence and disharmony, often paralyzing our communities.

To overcome discrimination, we emphasize the importance of access to education for all and quality education. For example, teacher training is very important to assure the quality of education. Education would be the best way to pursue positive peace in the world. Through education, people could learn to be critical, open minded, and to proactively speak up for a more peaceful world. While learning about the community to which we belong and its history is important, it is equally vital to learn about modern-day issues facing us currently in the world. A peaceful community means not only one in which everyone lives safely, but one where people accept, respect and cherish their differences, solving challenges in a dialogue without resorting to violent means.

3. The mass media have not played a sufficient role to inform us of the serious issues we face today. For example, news coverage is skewed, not covering armed conflicts in some parts of the world. Emergence of social media has filled in this gap in positive ways, however. People are also often misled by the internet, resulting in discriminatory behavior. We must not also forget about those people in post-conflict and developing countries who cannot readily access the internet.

To overcome this media coverage gap, we need to improve our media literacy. This means that we have to access, watch and read the media with a critical mind. While main stream media will remain the basis for our supply of information, the ongoing shift towards online and social media is inevitable. It is up to us to utilize the latter in an effective and balanced way. For example, multi-lingual media platforms should be expanded. This widened online access should be carried out in as many major languages as possible not only in Japanese and English but also those formally recognized by the United Nations. We also emphasize the necessity maintaining the use of traditional media such as books, pamphlets and other written materials which

do not require digital assistance.

<Our Role>

As the A-Bomb Survivors or “Hibakusha” are aging, we, the young individuals, also need to think about what we can do for the future generations to pass down their messages of peace.

For abolition of nuclear weapons, we, the young people of the world, can take the following actions. First, in order to raise people’s awareness, we will use various tools – such as collecting signatures to abolish nuclear weapons – to influence public opinion. If we can spread the idea of “Nuclear Taboo,” we can overcome the theory of nuclear deterrence. Second, we will share our experiences in Hiroshima and implement our action plan after going back to our home cities. Such effort must expand the network of the young individuals to move forward to the nuclear free world. Third, we will keep educating ourselves. Not only knowledge on nuclear weapons issues but also understanding other countries is a basic condition to overcome the mistrust between the countries.

For reconstruction and peacebuilding, creating a peaceful community is indispensable. Toward this, we the future leaders of the world can make following contributions in our daily lives. First, in order to overcome discrimination, we will be kind to others and those in need, as what goes around comes around. Second, we will also not be afraid to speak up for the right causes. Third, we will improve our media literacy, in order to obtain a balanced view. Fourth, we will aspire to be a bridge for a partnership between countries by creating a network of friendship, including our friends from the Hiroshima Junior International Forum.

For both the abolition of nuclear weapons and peacebuilding, we, the youth can also be effective messengers of peace by utilizing new methods that are available such as social media and crowdfunding.

<The Role of Hiroshima>

Finally, we considered the ways in which Hiroshima can contribute to the resolution of the issues above.

1. The tragic memory of humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is fading as 73 years have passed since the end of World War II. Now more than ever we believe it is important for Hiroshima to share the history and the stories of the Hibakusha to the world. While increasing public awareness about the nuclear weapon is vital, it is similarly essential to inform the world that radiation from the nuclear weapon affects survivors over generations. Hiroshima should be a hub, messenger and reminder of peace. To facilitate this, it should reach out to younger generations, with new methods and forms such as– drama, fine arts, music and comics, as well as effectively utilizing social media. We suggest that Hiroshima should constantly adapt and update its methods to keep up with the times.

2. We also believe in the importance of peace studies programs at school. However, there seems to be a gap between peace education inside and outside of Hiroshima. We need to listen to the voices of the Hibakusha – who experienced the war and atrocities firsthand – and learn from their direct history in order to create a peaceful future. In order to expand and widen the scope of a peace studies program, we believe that the program should not only cover Hiroshima, but also the stories and tragedies of other areas from Japan and other countries.
3. We also believe in the importance of – and are very grateful for – international exchange programs like the Hiroshima Junior International Forum. Such exchange programs provide an important opportunity to broaden our mindsets and share our thoughts and experiences. Peace starts from communication, and Hiroshima is an ideal city to discuss and think about the issue of peace. We also believe that the continuation of exchange programs such as these will open up a path for peace and it should be carried out appealing to and involving different generations – both young and old.

<Closing Remarks>

We are young, but it does not mean there is nothing we can do. We are citizens of the world and concerned about global peace. As responsible citizens such as these, we will maintain our interest in elections closely and critically watch the decisions made by our leaders. Furthermore, we can get involved in our respective local and global communities by supporting and actively participating in civil society, working on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Yet, at the same time we want to emphasize the importance to be thankful for the small things. These include the importance of keeping an open mind, maintaining our passion and most of all, starting changes from ourselves. Neither the large scale nor small scale is more important than the other.

As Ambassadors for Peace, we pledge our determination to contribute to world peace according to the aims and initiatives outlined in this declaration. Our mission and our passion for it will be our drive and our own encouragement. Now we are ready to start our efforts for a better future.