

Second Meeting of States Parties to the
Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
Second Panel Discussion Presentation by Hiroshima Prefecture

Thank you, Your Excellency Mr. President.

Excellences, Distinguished Delegates, I'm Hidehiko Yuzaki, the governor of Hiroshima Prefecture and the president of HOPE, the Hiroshima Organization for Global Peace.

It is my great pleasure and honor to have this opportunity to speak, and I am also truly grateful for your efforts to realize this second meeting of states parties to the TPNW.

Hiroshima as the first place to experience the devastation of nuclear warfare is deeply concerned with current escalating global situation surrounding nuclear weapons. The deepening divisions and confrontations within the international community, coupled with an increasing reliance on nuclear deterrence and the reinforcement of nuclear forces, would lead to inexorably military expansion.

Maintaining a peaceful world is a prerequisite for ensuring that all of us can lead stable social lives for many years to come. Social and economic development and prosperity can be achieved only when peace and safety are secured for each of us. This is a fundamental condition that affects all of us, regardless of our nationality, race, age, or gender. Moreover, we humans have no right to threaten the lives of all other creatures on the earth.

Until the TPNW came into force, however, discussions there were limited in the international community within the framework of arms control and disarmament, such as the START agreement between the U.S. and Russia, or the FMBT and CTBT, or risk reduction. Nevertheless, there were not many in-depth discussions on the mid- to long-term goal of total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In order to evade the recurrence of the catastrophe that people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced, we convey the inhumanity of the use of nuclear weapons to the world at large by inviting and welcoming foreign dignitaries to visit Hiroshima. The Hiroshima ICAN Academy is another example of our capacity-building initiative for future global leaders. It is absolutely crucial to equip the next generations with the idea of a peaceful world without nuclear weapons, and grow with them to work toward to this end.

What's more do we need to set the scene for achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons? What action is now needed to motivate the world? Hiroshima Prefecture would like to make the following two proposals: first, building alternative security systems that do not rely on nuclear deterrence, and second, promoting the elimination of nuclear weapons from the viewpoint of sustainability of the planet and humanity.

Let me start with the search for alternative security systems beyond nuclear deterrence.

Nuclear deterrence is based on distrust – assuming that the other party including its treaty or doctrine can never be trustworthy, to the degree of equipping oneself with the nuclear arsenals for protection. However, that very idea that nuclear weapons can intimidate an opponent's actions is also an assumption, only a fictional belief, and it can well be broken anytime.

Although nuclear weapons may seem to serve national security, they can never safeguard the peaceful lives of individual people. Should nuclear deterrence fails, our life on this planet will never be the same. Worse, a nuclear war could even exterminate human civilization.

To avert this future tragedy, we need to envision a world that does not rely on nuclear weapons for its security. If we can together create such a security system that ensures acceptable security without nuclear weapons, countries relying on nuclear deterrence may be able to renounce their nuclear arsenals and align their efforts toward a nuclear-weapon free future.

Based on this view, Hiroshima Prefecture is searching for new security systems that do not rely on nuclear weapons with specialists in this field. We are examining and evaluating the extended deterrence of nuclear weapons in the regional security environment, while developing a vision of global security that does not rely on nuclear deterrence.

While this is an ambitious endeavor, it is very important to envision a "security that does not rely on nuclear deterrence." It is a vision worth pursuing with much wisdom from around the world.

To advance our steps toward the abolition of nuclear weapons, I truly hope that you will join us in the search for new security systems that do not depend on nuclear deterrence. Your participation in this search will surely help encouraging countries to become signatories of the TPNW.

Another policy initiative that we propose today is to include the issues of nuclear weapons in the current and future discussions of “sustainability” of our planet and humanity.

Throughout their lifecycle, from production to dismantlement, nuclear weapons inhibit our efforts on social development. The narratives shared by the affected community, the work of the experts and Scientific Advisory Group testify this claim.

Nuclear weapons do not provide lasting security. Rather, they make our society unsustainable, causing various social problems, and burden us and hinder our much efforts for a sustainable development. Elimination of nuclear weapons will surely generate much needed resources to bring us closer to a sustainable and prosperous future for the earth and for ourselves.

We should communicate with a wide array of experts, activists and people that in order to ensure a sustainable future, we need to eliminate nuclear weapons. They too are striving to protect people and the earth in their respective fields, such as environmental protection, healthcare, human rights, and gender issues. It is imperative to articulate this nexus between sustainable development and nuclear weapons and have those people on board, raising their awareness and sharing with them a vision of a sustainable future without nuclear weapons.

To create a truly sustainable world, we must eliminate nuclear weapons. This in fact will contribute to the universalization of the TPNW as well.

Hiroshima Prefecture aims to convey to a diverse range of stakeholders that the abolition of nuclear weapons will pave the way for a sustainable and prosperous future. Anchored in the belief that the abolition of nuclear weapons ensures lasting peace and prosperity, we seek to advance the cause and mainstream the pursuit of peace and prosperity in a nuclear weapon-free sustainable future.

To move this agenda forward, in 2020, we established HOPE, Hiroshima Organization for Global Peace, consisting of 20 organizations in Hiroshima including universities, NPOs, and chambers of commerce and industry. The Global Alliance for Sustainable Peace and Prosperity for All (GASPPA) is another CSO platform we launched last year with Nagasaki Prefecture and various NGOs and concerned citizens. Together, we reframe the nuclear weapons issues within the discourse of sustainable development and advocate nuclear disarmament to be included in the UN's post-SDG global agenda.

For this purpose, we are establishing a Group of Friends with the like-minded Member States to roll out the campaigns with the related policy papers of experts. The Summit of the Future in September 2024 is one of the landmark event we see as an opportunity to gain support for the cause.

Given the worsening security situation, we see that a sense of urgency growing regarding the risks of nuclear weapons, along with other social problems, including the stagnation and worsening poverty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change.

Based on Our Common Agenda, UN Secretary-General has announced The New Agenda for Peace in July 2023, following the High-Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism's Report in April. They both recognize the elimination of nuclear weapons as a crucial and urgent agenda for a sustainable future.

Now is the time to seize this opportunity and pave the way for a brighter future with no more nuclear weapons and built on the framework of sustainability.

Distinguished delegates, I truly believe that "we must stop thinking of security in narrow, nationalistic frames, and accept that our collective survival depends on greater investment in peace," as the HLAB Report mentions.

As I close, I'm calling for your participation to break down the barriers and change our course of the future toward a sustainable one. Together, we can universalize the movement to ensure the peace and prosperity without nuclear weapons for the next generations to come.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.