

JOINT APPEAL

International Symposium on “War Never Again—in pursuit of the abolition of nuclear weapons”,
Commemorating the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing

We, representing the Community of Sant’Egidio, Japan Religious Committee for World Federation, Religions for Peace Japan, have gathered in Hiroshima for the International Symposium titled: War Never Again--Nuclear Disarmament Conference on the 70th Anniversary of the Atomic Bomb. Two atomic bombs, which stole the lives of over 200,000 civilians by the end of 1945, even today continue to harm the health of subsequent generations. In this context, the atomic bombings are *not* a history of the past *but* rather a history of the present. This was eloquently expressed in this Symposium when we reaffirmed: “the threat of what happened here [Hiroshima] still hangs over us all.”

Speeches, dialogues, comments and discussions in this Symposium have converged on the following four issues: 1) the advocacy of “War Never Again” to be encouraged further; 2) the rising trend of humanitarian approach to nuclear weapons together with a serious emphasis on the de-legitimization of them; 3) the urgent need to codify a nuclear weapons convention (NWC) and 4) the necessity to build up a culture of peace that allows all human beings in every society in every part of the world to live together respectfully.

In addition, we have come to share the view that after examining the inhumane and de-legitimizing aspects of nuclear weapons, it is inevitable that a NWC agreed by governments will come into existence in due course. The point of discussion that clearly stood out was the shared belief that debating the necessity of a NWC is already outdated, and that the focus at this moment should be on what kind of a NWC is to be formulated. It was pointed out furthermore that among weapons of mass destruction, only nuclear weapons lack a legally binding instrument, as conventions exist for biological and chemical weapons. In order to fill this “legal gap,” it was stressed in the Symposium that we must urge governments that have not yet done so to sign the *Humanitarian Pledge* drafted by the Austrian government, which identifies logical steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

In view of the outcome of this Symposium, where it was stated that the mere existence of nuclear weapons was evil, we re-generate our commitment to such programs listed below to realize “a world without war” and “a world free of nuclear weapons” in cooperation with governments as well as UN Agencies, Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (PNND), Mayors for Peace, Abolition 2000, International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) and other organizations that advocate nuclear disarmament widely:

1. programs, which urge governments to start negotiating a NWC;
 2. programs for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education to train the younger generation that can and must build a future of peace in all societies;
3. programs, which appeal to religious communities all over the world, to raise awareness of each society about nuclear disarmament and, specifically to commemorate 26 September that was designated by the United Nations in the fall of 2013 as the *International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons* with prayer in solidarity.

In today’s Symposium, we listened to the testimony of a *Hibakusha* of Hiroshima. It reminded us that we must become servants for the common good of humanity so that people’s memory of atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki never fade away. We are increasingly convinced as the imperative of people in faith communities that war must never be fought again. Religions are called to protect and strengthen the feeling of peace written in the hearts and minds of men and women, because it could grow up and could be communicated from one heart to another. With this renewed confidence, at the end of our Symposium we want to raise a message of peace, which can reach every land, especially, those still wounded by war and violence. With them and for them, we say: War Never Again!

Hiroshima, August 6th, 2015
on the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombing