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Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations
(Nihon Hidankyo)

Thank you for this opportunity to speak before you. I am WADA Masako of Nihon Hidankyo. I was 1 year and 10 months old when I was exposed to the atomic bomb in Nagasaki, in a house 2.9 kilometers from the hypocenter.

I was too young to remember what happened on that day, but I grew up listening to my mother talking from time to time about her experience: how the blast had shattered all the windows, mud walls, and latticed doors in the house. What she saw on the mountainside was a line of people, fleeing from the fire at the hypocenter to the area where we lived. Their bodies were heavily burnt and they had very little clothing on. Burned and injured people were laid all over the floor of a school auditorium, and countless fat maggots were wriggling on their bodies. Bodies left on the road were thrown onto carts and collected, and were cremated from morning till night. My mother became numbed by the smell and lost all sense of humanity.

What is human dignity? Human beings are not created to be treated like this and burned like garbage.

After the atomic bombing, the U.S. imposed intensive press censorship and covered up the inhuman consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. For 10 years, both the Japanese and the U.S. governments abandoned the Hibakusha, who were forced into silence and marginalized in society. Without receiving any official help, 140,000 people in Hiroshima and 70,000 in Nagasaki were recorded as killed by the end of 1945.

The average age of the surviving Hibakusha has reached 84. Their pain and suffering are deep and still continue: the deaths of loved ones and survivors' guilt; the scenes, sounds and smells of that time etched in their memory; diseases of unknown cause; economic difficulty; prejudice and discrimination; so many dreams given up. All these difficulties forced those who were under the mushroom clouds on that day to die or survive as the Hibakusha. The consequences continue to affect the children of Hibakusha and those who were A-bombed in utero, both physically and mentally.

In the 66 years since the founding in 1956 of Nihon Hidankyo, the Hibakusha have pledged their determination to "save humanity from its crisis through the lessons learned from our experiences, while at the same time saving ourselves." The A-bomb survivors' earnest wish is that these "inhumane weapons" should never be used again "under any circumstances."

Since 2005, Nihon Hidankyo has held an A-bomb exhibition in the Visitors' Lobby of the United Nations Headquarters timed to coincide with the NPT Review Conference. We are now holding our fourth exhibition, so please come and visit.

There were those who produced the atomic bombs, those who used them, and those who rejoiced at the power and result of their use. We cannot forgive them. But the Hibakusha have never wished for revenge, because we know that if nuclear weapons are used for the third time, whether intentionally or by chance, there will no longer be anyone left alive who will happily observe the consequences. Nuclear weapons, which are still being produced “for the sake of deterrence” and “not for actual use,” are nothing but a negative legacy of humankind. The power derived from the possession of nuclear weapons cannot be a just power.

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was achieved by the determined efforts of non-nuclear weapon states, who were frustrated by the nuclear weapon states' neglect of their obligation to implement the NPT. The nuclear-armed states and their allies should recognize how, due to their insincerity, the entire human race has been brought to the brink of nuclear war. How many of you involved in politics have met Hibakusha and listened to their A-bomb testimonies? Please learn the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. We appeal to the conscience and wisdom of each of you who represent your country, to sincerely discuss and recommit yourselves in this Review Conference to the implementation of the “unequivocal undertaking” to eliminate nuclear arsenals, which was reconfirmed in 2010.

Thank you very much.