Based on My Experience Under the Mushroom Cloud,  
I Aspire for a World Free of Nuclear Weapons

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Chairperson, delegates and dear friends,

Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak before you on behalf of the Hibakusha, A-bomb survivors.

I am a survivor of Hiroshima that suffered the atomic bombing on August 6, 1945. At that time, I was a 7-year-old primary school student, and I was inside a wooden school building.

Suddenly I felt a blinding flash. The next moment, the ceiling of the building collapsed and sharp splinters of windowpanes flew all around. They stuck into the walls, desks and the floor of the classroom, and into my skin. In the school nurse’s office, I had the glass fragments removed from my body, but there was no medicine and bandage to treat my injuries.

My father managed to come to the school to find me. On my way home, carried on his back, I witnessed hell on earth: I saw many people with their skins burned heavily and peeled off; A mother was carrying a baby, who was burned-black like charcoal; She, too, was heavily burned all over her body; Some people, whose eyeballs were popped out or who were holding their protruding intestines in their hands, desperately tried to take refuge.

I used to go to a school located about 350 meters away from the blast center. But by an order of the government, my family relocated and I transferred to another school shortly before the bombing. If we had stayed in our old place, I could not have survived. Later I learned about 400 students of my old school were killed instantly.

When I arrived home located 3.5 kilometers from the blast center, I found the roof of the house blown away by the blast and fragments of glass scattered all around. The “Black Rain,” containing large amount of radiation, fell into the house, and the traces of the rain on the wall remained for a long time.

My favorite cousin, who was like a big sister for me, was caught by the bomb at about 500 meters from the epicenter. Half of her face, her entire back and her right leg were severely
burned, sore and raw. Her burns quickly festered and flies swarmed. Soon maggots bred and crawled around her body. She complained about pain, but her voice got weaker gradually. On the morning of August 9, she died in my arms at age 14.

Another cousin at age 10 had no injuries or burns except having diarrhea. One day he began to bleed from his ears and nose, vomited blood clots and died suddenly. Some of my relatives died one after the other by the end of August.

It is most painful for me now to speak about my second daughter. In 2010, at age 45, she got cancer. After the 13-hour operation, she was going through treatment and rehabilitation, despite great physical and mental pains. But she died abruptly in spring 2011, only 4 months after she was first diagnosed.

When I got pregnant with her, after much worrying about possible radiation effects on her, I finally decided to give birth to her. Her death has given me deep sorrow and regret.

In order not to repeat such tragedy on anyone in the world, we have called for “No more Hibakushas”. Because out of our own experiences, we know that if nuclear weapons are used again, they would cause catastrophic damage to human beings beyond national borders; they never protect people’s lives or security.

The only guarantee to prevent such damage to humanity is to abolish nuclear weapons. Now the United Nations conference to negotiate a treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination, has started, but the nuclear weapon states refuse to participate in it, saying that the treaty would undermine the NPT regime.

However, neglecting to implement Article 6 of the NPT by nuclear weapon states has increased the danger of nuclear weapons being proliferated. The NPT regime is already being undermined. We firmly believe that only the conclusion of the treaty currently under negotiation will ensure non-proliferation and progress towards abolition of nuclear weapons. We call on nuclear weapon states and their allies to participate in the negotiation conference.

In April 2016, we launched the International Signature Campaign in support of the “Appeal of the Hibakusha,” calling for the conclusion of a treaty to prohibit and eliminate nuclear weapons. We aim to get support for the campaign from hundreds of millions of people all over the world.

We Hibakusha want nuclear weapons to be abolished in our lifetime. Let us work together to achieve this goal.