

## Message

It is an honor and pleasure to send this message on the occasion of the Earth Caravan 2016 visit to Hiroshima City.

I have been told that Earth Caravan was launched in the summer of 2015, the milestone year of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II, and expanded its itinerary this year to deliver a message of peace to more places. On behalf of the 1.19 million Hiroshima citizens that wish for the realization of nuclear weapons abolition and everlasting world peace, I would like to extend my sincere respect and gratitude to people involved in this project.

On August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb rendered Hiroshima a scorched plain and tens of thousands were burned in flames. By year's end, 140,000 irreplaceable lives had been taken. Those who managed to survive, their lives grotesquely distorted, were left to suffer serious physical and emotional aftereffects compounded by discrimination and prejudice. Nuclear weapons are an absolute evil and ultimate inhumanity.

This absolute evil in the form of more than 15,000 nuclear weapons still exists in the world, threatening the very survival of human beings. As long as such weapons remain, anyone could become a *hibakusha* at any time.

Human beings, regardless of differences of nationality, race, religion, and language, share the planet to live out our one-time-only lives. To coexist, instead of resorting to the inhumane threat posed by nuclear weapons, we must value person-to-person relationships, and build a world that allows forward-looking dialogue.

Toward this end, we call on everyone throughout the world to share the sincere message of our *hibakusha*, "No one else should ever suffer as we have," and to act with us. This heartrending message, forged through suffering and sorrow by transcending anger and hatred and by looking ahead to the future of human beings, can be a driving force to unify people beyond a series of differences. Mayors for Peace whose membership now exceeds 7,000 cities in 161 countries and regions has shared the *hibakusha*'s message and devoted itself to mobilizing people beyond national borders and increasing international momentum toward negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention. Our goal is the total abolition by 2020.

Currently, the need for a legal framework to ban nuclear weapons has been increasingly recognized by the international community. It is now necessary to urge policymakers around the world to share the *hibakusha*'s sentiment and to tirelessly engage in dialogue. The roles of cities, NGOs and citizens, all of which can give a boost to this effort, are more important than ever. In this sense, it is truly significant that participants in Earth Caravan 2016 are calling for the realization of a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons in places around the world and expanding the circle of empathy. I would like to ask all of you to continue to strive with us by taking this opportunity to renew your commitment to the elimination of the absolute evil of nuclear weapons and to the realization of everlasting world peace.

In closing, I extend my best wishes for the great success of Earth Caravan 2016 as well as the good health and happiness of all in attendance.

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President of Mayors for Peace