

Report from the 5th Nagasaki Global Citizen's Assembly for The Elimination of Nuclear Weapons

November 2 – 4, 2013

Jackie Cabasso, Executive Director, Western States Legal Foundation

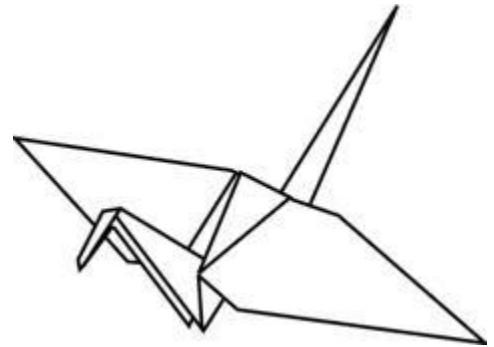
The 5th Nagasaki Global Citizen's Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons was held in Nagasaki Nov. 2 – 4, 2013. Hosted and organized by a committee made up of local NGOs, Nagasaki City and the Nagasaki prefectural government, the Assembly involved hundreds of local activists, academics, NGO representatives and scholars from around Japan, and international NGO representatives from Australia, New Zealand, the Netherlands, South Korea, and the United States, in a series of spirited workshops and plenary sessions where they also heard presentations by A-bomb survivors (hibakusha), religious leaders, the Mayor of Nagasaki, the Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture, a representative from the Norwegian Embassy in Japan, a representative from the Japanese Foreign Ministry and local high school students. The opening and closing ceremonies were interspersed with an impressive variety of cultural performances including a Hand Bell recital by junior high and high school students, "Deux Marches" – a remarkable violin and accordion duo, an improvisational jazz trombonist, dance troupes, children's choruses, an operatic soprano, and the very moving "Himari" (sunflower) choir, the world's only hibakusha choir. The workshops and plenaries explored rejecting nuclear "umbrellas" (extended deterrence)

and expanding Nuclear Weapon Free Zones; the Fukushima nuclear power plant accident and its relationship to the Atomic bombing of Nagasaki; establishing a legal framework to ban nuclear weapons; transmitting the legacy of the hibakusha to future generations; and what the world should do to address the inhumanity of nuclear weapons.

An international drafting committee worked throughout the conference to produce the 2013 Nagasaki Appeal, reflecting the discussions and findings of the conference. The comprehensive appeal, which was adopted by the closing plenary, calls for concrete actions at the international level, and makes specific appeals to the Japanese government.

The Nagasaki Appeal calls on governments to commence negotiations on the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, phase-out of any reliance on nuclear weapons, adopt national legislation to prohibit nuclear weapons, divest from all corporations manufacturing nuclear weapons systems, and redirect nuclear weapons expenditure to meeting social and economic needs. The Appeal also calls on governments and civil society to publicize the decision of the District Court of Tokyo on the 50th anniversary of its December 8, 1963 decision in the Shimoda

case, which found: "*The [atomic bomb] attacks upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki caused such severe and indiscriminate suffering that they did violate the most basic legal principles governing the conduct of war.*" The Appeal also declares, "*The accident at Fukushima has taught us that we cannot continue to rely upon nuclear energy,*" and calls on the Japanese government to seek and welcome independent international expert assistance in addressing the ongoing radiological crisis.



It has been a pleasure and an honor for me to speak at all five Nagasaki Global Citizen's Assemblies (beginning in 2000), and to serve on their drafting committees. Read the full text of the 2013 Nagasaki Appeal at www.wsclfweb.org/docs/2013_Nagasaki_Appeal.pdf

2013 Nagasaki Appeal (Excerpts)

Although more than 50,000 nuclear weapons have been eliminated since 1986, more than 17,000 remain. It would only take a small number of these weapons of mass destruction to end civilization and most life on earth. Nine countries possess nuclear weapons, another five host U.S. nuclear weapons on their soil, and more still base their security on alliances with nuclear weapon states. Countless atomic bomb survivors worked hard until their last days for the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The danger of nuclear annihilation, by accident, miscalculation or design continues to cast a dark shadow over humanity's future. In addition, the failure of the nuclear weapon states to achieve more progress toward a nuclear weapons free world is undermining the legitimacy of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). The nuclear weapon states' repeated delays in fulfilling their "unequivocal" commitment to nuclear disarmament has discredited the nonproliferation regime and may destroy it.

The massive and ongoing releases of radiation from the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima nuclear power plant which resulted from the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011, demonstrated yet again the inability of human beings to control nuclear technology. The fear and suffering of Fukushima citizens for their health and life renewed our recognition of the danger of radioactivity, whether from nuclear weapons or nuclear energy. The experiences of Fukushima and the atomic bombings of Nagasaki and Hiroshima have shown us that the effects of nuclear disasters are uncontrollable in time and space.

Despite the daunting challenges, there are reasons for hope. Among them, the renewed emphasis on the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons use, which the hibakusha have been calling for for decades... Describing the inhumanity of nuclear weapons, the resolution adopted in November 2011 by the Council of Delegates of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement identified the need to "conclude ... negotiations to prohibit the use of and completely eliminate nuclear weapons through a legally binding international agreement." In addition, an international conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, hosted by the government of Norway, was held in Oslo in March 2013. A follow-on meeting will be hosted by the government of Mexico in February 2014. We welcome this trend and expect it to contribute to global efforts to achieve the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons....

....We emphasize and reiterate that nuclear weapons are indiscriminate and inhumane weapons of mass destruction, and their use would be impermissible under any circumstances. The idea that nuclear deterrence can assure a country's security is delusional. Another use of nuclear weapons would cause human death and suffering across national borders and generations. It would result in destruction of the environment and entire ecosystems. Even a relatively small regional nuclear exchange could result in a global "nuclear famine" leading to a billion deaths....

....We, the participants in the 5th Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, heard again the voices of survivors of the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and their urgent appeal that the elimination of nuclear weapons becomes a reality while they are still alive. We also listened to hopeful voices of young people accepting responsibility for achieving and maintaining a world without nuclear weapons. The ties of mutual understanding and solidarity were deepened through three days of spirited interaction and discussion.

We pledge to continue our utmost efforts to achieve a world without nuclear weapons, and we appeal to the people of the world: "Nagasaki must be the last A-bombed city."

November 4th 2013

The 5th Nagasaki Global Citizens' Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
Full text (4 pages): www.wslfweb.org/docs/2013_Nagasaki_Appeal.pdf