Forum of Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons

Panel discussion

Remarks by Mr. KIM Won-soo
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

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Mr TAKEI, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

Mr Yoji YAMADA

Ms Sayuri YOSHINAGA

Ms. Kaoru NEMOTO

Youth leaders

Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, I want to thank the University of Nagasaki for hosting today’s event. I also want to thank Shochiku Productions and the Government of Japan for their support.

Mr Yamada, as the creator of the beloved Tora San series you are a national treasure here in Japan. My sincerest appreciation to you for your artistry and giving us Nagasaki: Memories of My Son. It is a lasting contribution to the cause of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

Ms Yoshinaga, I thank you for your moving portrayal in Nagasaki: Memories of My Son. I also thank you for your lifelong commitment to a world-free of nuclear weapons, including your work with the brave hibakusha. I am inspired by your words: “Even the smallest voices and the least powerful people must keep pushing for peace.”

The film we have all just seen is a powerful reminder of the great devastation caused by nuclear weapons. It is a story about the damage these weapons cause to ordinary people – mothers, sons, lovers and families. It shows how easily nuclear weapons can snuff out the bright lights of thousands of lives.

It is also a film about our essential humanity in the face of great tragedy. This is my third visit to Nagasaki as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. It is a city of resilience and diversity that refuses to be overcome by its past.

At one point in Nagasaki, a character points to where the mushroom cloud rose on 11:02AM on 9 August 1945 and says, “How can human beings do this to each other?”

Seventy years later, this is a question we have not yet answered. Fifteen thousand nuclear weapons remain in the world, when it is obvious that even one is too many.

The community of nations has failed to prohibit and eliminate these weapons, despite their horrific human, environmental and social impacts.

We all share the desire for a world in which these weapons do not exist, but we are sharply divided over how to realise it. Consequently, the world is locked in a stalemate, all the while the risks and threats posed by nuclear weapons continue to grow.

This is why I am pleased to be here with you today and to see so many passionate young people who care about our future.
Nagasaki is an important reminder of the need to remember the lessons of the past. These are lessons you must learn. As Secretary-General Ban has said, the United Nations has the highest expectations of our young peacemakers. Your generation did not invent nuclear weapons, but you can be the ones to eliminate them.

As the hibakusha grow older it is up to you to carry their flame forward, to reach out to new generations and to remind the world why there can be no more Hiroshimas and no more Nagasakis.

As young people, you can bring new ideas and fresh thinking to the cause of peace and security. You have an energy and a passion that can be harnessed to this great cause of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The United Nations is here to help however we can.

I thank you so much.