

Check Against Delivery



Atomic Bomb Awareness Day – Genbaku-No-Hi
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70 years ago the world stood still. For today marks one of the most infamous anniversaries - the bombing of Hiroshima. Three days later, the tragedy repeated itself in Nagasaki. The consequences of these events are still being felt today, through illnesses and genetic deformations caused by exposure to radiation.

The 70th commemoration of these bombings is an important occasion not only to remember those who suffered and continue to suffer, but also to look forward and set our sights on the accomplishment of one goal: never again. Never again should we bear witness to the devastating consequences of the use of atomic weapons.

The Hibakusha will not be with us forever. Their message of “never again” must remain ours, for the sake of future generations. The traces of the catastrophes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki need to be relegated to history-books and films, serving as powerful reminders that these tragedies must never be repeated again. This is a time for us to remember, but it is also a time for us to act.

Nuclear testing has led to weapons that are several orders of magnitude more destructive than those used on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. And nuclear testing has helped more countries acquire nuclear weapons.

Over 2000 nuclear tests were carried out in more than 60 different locations worldwide. The majority of these explosions were much bigger than those over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Radioactive fall-out and contamination from nuclear tests have had dire consequences for human health and the environment at the nuclear test sites and within their vicinities.

Next year will mark the 20th anniversary since the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was adopted and opened for signature by the United Nations General Assembly. This Treaty bans all nuclear explosions anytime, anywhere. Much progress has been made since 1996 and we are well on our way towards deploying a multilateral, fully functional and inclusive verification regime, which has been tried and tested on several occasions. While the Treaty has not yet entered into force, 90% of all countries have said “no” to nuclear testing. We now need all countries, especially the remaining eight whose ratifications are still missing for the Treaty's entry into force, to also say "never" by urgently ratifying the CTBT.

Earlier today, CTBTO Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo laid a wreath at the solemn commemoration ceremony held in Hiroshima and on Sunday he will also attend the Nagasaki ceremony. Following the Hiroshima ceremony, the Executive Secretary said: “The 70th

anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is an important occasion not only to remember those who suffered and continue to suffer, but also to renew the call for the total ban on nuclear testing.”

Let us all work tirelessly to ensure that nuclear weapons are never exploded again - not in wartime, not in peace time - and that these weapons are forever relegated to relics of the past. For the sake of the Hibakusha, for future generation, and for human kind.

Thank you.