

Foreign Minister Kishida's Opening Remarks
at the Hiroshima Forum of Former Youth Communicators
for a World without Nuclear Weapons

Sunday, March 27th, at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, Memorial Hall

Good morning everyone. I am Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Hiroshima Prefecture and the City of Hiroshima for rendering us their valuable support in hosting today the Hiroshima Forum of Former Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, as a preceding event to the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Hiroshima. Thank you all for your cooperation and presence today.

Since my assumption of office as the Minister for Foreign Affairs in December 2012, I have been redoubling efforts toward a world free of nuclear weapons, bearing in mind the sense of mission of the country to have ever suffered atomic bombings as well as the hopes of the people and communities affected by them. Particularly, I have always underlined the importance of spreading the correct understanding of the realities of atomic bombings beyond borders and generations, and of robust cooperation between nuclear-weapon-States and non-nuclear-weapon-States.

More than seventy years have passed since the atomic bombings. It is imperative for us to firmly pass on to young generations the hopes of the affected communities and people toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In spring 2013, I launched a new program, "the Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons", in addition to the existing program, "the Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons" with a view to encouraging participation of young people in this endeavor. Since its launch, one hundred and seven young people have served as Youth Communicators. In April last year, twenty four Young Communicators participated in the Review Conference on the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is held every five years,

and expressed their opinions in their own words to people of the United Nations and from all across the world. "I would like to take over the baton of peace from atomic bomb survivors and war survivors." "Our duty is to listen to the testimonies of atomic bomb survivors and pass on their hopes to next generations." These are the words of Youth Communicators who participated in the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva last year. As the person who started this program, I am very encouraged by the outstanding performance of these young people. I strongly hope that they will continue to embrace this sense of mission. I strongly wish to dispatch more young people abroad. I strongly desire that young people around the world will share this sense of mission. This is why I have called this forum today.

Currently, there is increasing nuclear proliferation concern, as North Korea conducted a nuclear test and launched ballistic missiles. Since the NPT Review Conference of last year could not reach consensus on a final document, rift between nuclear-weapon-States and non-nuclear-weapon-States has become deeper, and unfortunately the momentum and tide of international efforts toward a world free of nuclear weapons have been withered. We are facing a very difficult situation today.

At very such time, we have to spread the correct understanding of the realities of atomic bombings across borders and generations and revitalize the momentum toward nuclear disarmament. This is why I am announcing today the commencement of a new initiative, "International Networking Initiative of Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons" to spread the understanding on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons across borders and generations.

Our idea is to strengthen the current Youth Communicator program by networking it in Japan and worldwide. For that purpose, we have decided to hold an annual meeting of young people who have served as Youth Communicator to strengthen their networking, and to assign young people from different countries but with the same spirit who will make this program more global. Through this initiative, we seek

further promotion of correct understanding of the realities of atomic bombings. Through this initiative, people all over the world will know that our hope for a world free of nuclear weapons does not know national borders. I would also like to take this opportunity to announce that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will invite more than 1,000 people from all over the world to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in the next fiscal year, so as to provide opportunity to witness the realities of atomic bombings. The International Networking Initiative of Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons and the Invitation Program of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are the two initiatives that I would like to announce today.

The G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting is scheduled to take place here in Hiroshima in two weeks. I believe the G7 Meeting, which includes both nuclear-weapon-States and non-nuclear-weapon-States, offers an excellent opportunity to promote mutual cooperation. I also believe that deepening the understanding of the realities of atomic bombings among world leaders is important for revitalizing global momentum for a world free of nuclear weapons. I will conduct a sound discussion on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, paying due respect to the opinions and discussions by the young people assembled here today. I hope that a revival of global momentum for the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons, which unfortunately has withered today, starts from Hiroshima. To reboot efforts toward a world free of nuclear weapons – that is what the upcoming Foreign Ministers' Meeting has to realize.

I see great possibilities in everyone assembled here today. As a Foreign Minister from Hiroshima, I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my resolve to put utmost efforts into the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you for your attention.