

Address by Prime Minister Kishida at the opening session
of the third meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons
for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP)
(Read out by Special Advisor to the Prime Minister ISHIHARA Hirotaka)

December 8, 2023
[Provisional translation]

At the opening of the meeting, I would like to deliver Prime Minister Kishida's opening address on his behalf.

Thank you very much for gathering here in Nagasaki today for the third meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP). Unfortunately, I was unable to attend today's opening session, but I will certainly be there for tomorrow's closing session. I look forward to meeting you all.

The international security environment has become even more severe due to Russia's aggression against Ukraine and the situation surrounding Israel and Palestine. The international community has become even more divided over how to advance nuclear disarmament, and the world is on the cusp of a reversal of the decreasing trend of the global number of nuclear arsenals for the first time since the peak of the Cold War. This is the very reason why the IGEP, where participants from both nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, can sit down and address fundamental issues on nuclear disarmament, has become even more important.

I understand that you all have just visited the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Museum, listened to a lecture by Mr. TSUIKI Shohei, and engaged in dialogue with hibakusha and members of the civil society. I believe it is very meaningful that the IGEP members were able to directly see and deepen their understanding of the reality of the atomic bombing, prior to the discussions that will take place over the next two days.

Throughout my political career, I have consistently worked on nuclear disarmament as a lifelong mission. At the G7 Hiroshima Summit this May, to build international momentum toward nuclear disarmament, the G7 leaders deepened their understanding of the reality of the atomic bombing and pushed it out to the entire world. In addition, we had candid discussions with the G7 leaders and issued the "G7 Leaders' Hiroshima Vision on Nuclear Disarmament," the first G7 Leaders' stand-alone document on nuclear disarmament.

In September, I hosted the Commemorative High-Level Event on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) with Australia and the Philippines and refocused political attention towards the FMCT. Through these efforts, we were able to demonstrate once again our resolve toward a world without nuclear weapons.

However difficult the path may be, we do not stop moving forward. We must continue to advance realistic and practical efforts. To this end, the sage of the IGEP, based on professional and constructive discussions, is indispensable. In addition to the 15 members of the IGEP, who are leading experts in the field of nuclear disarmament in their respective countries, we enjoy the support of global political leaders with great influence. Today, at the opening of the meeting, we have messages from a wide range of political leaders from around the world, including H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet Jeria, Former President of the Republic of Chile, H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, and the Honorable Sam Nunn, Former United States Senator. In addition, Ambassador Amina Mohamed, Former Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kenya is joining this session online. Furthermore, the Rt Hon. the Lord Browne of Ladyton, Member of the House of Lords of the United Kingdom is scheduled to join us tomorrow. I would also like to thank Mr. TOMONAGA Masao, Honorary Director of the Japanese Red Cross Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Hospital for his participation from Nagasaki.

Now, I believe that this meeting is an important opportunity to deeply discuss the fundamental issues that we must overcome for a world without nuclear weapons from today's perspective, and to begin consideration of the final product of the IGEP for the 2026 NPT Review Conference. I hope that you will have frank and candid discussions and show a concrete path toward a world without nuclear weapons.

I hope that the third meeting of the IGEP in Nagasaki will be an important step forward in our efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons.

December 8, 2023, the Prime Minister of Japan, KISHIDA Fumio.