

The International Group of Eminent Persons
for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP)
Public Event

Symposium “Towards the 2026 NPT Review Conference”
Opening Remarks by State Minister for Foreign Affairs MIYAJI Takuma

April 1, 2025
[Provisional Translation]

Esteemed Members of the International Group of Eminent Persons,
Rector Mogherini,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning. I am MIYAJI Takuma, State-Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Thank you for attending this public event of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP). To the IGEP members present here today, I would like to express my sincere gratitude for your dedicated efforts in compiling recommendations. To Rector Mogherini, we are deeply grateful for your participation in our discussions as a political leader, all the way from Europe to Japan.

As you all know, this year marks the 80th year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I previously had an opportunity to work for Hiroshima City Government for approximately three years and attended the Peace Memorial Ceremony on August 6th twice. Through this experience, I personally came to understand the profound significance that the tragedy of 80 years ago and the efforts to pass on its memory hold for the survivors, their families, and all those who have a connection to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Thus, I well understand the feelings of frustration among the survivors and civil society regarding the slow progress of the international community towards a world without nuclear weapons at this critical juncture. I also understand their anxieties and sense of urgency regarding the future of the multilateral nuclear disarmament and arms control, given the severe security environment and geopolitical shifts in the international community.

We must not allow our steps of nuclear disarmament towards a world without nuclear weapons to regress. To this end, it is essential to involve nuclear-weapon States in concrete nuclear disarmament measures, utilizing the framework of dialogue and cooperation that includes both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

Based on this conviction, Japan has been steadily building up its efforts under the "Hiroshima Action Plan," which was proposed by then Prime Minister Kishida. The establishment of this IGEP is also part of these efforts. The path towards a world without nuclear weapons through such realistic and practical efforts is long, arduous. The results may not be immediately apparent. However, substantive progress can only be achieved by steadfastly moving forward step by step.

Next year, the Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be held. It also marks the 50th anniversary of Japan's ratification of the NPT. Faced with a challenging situation, Japan, as the only country to have ever experienced the horror of nuclear devastation in war, is once again called upon to leverage its past efforts accumulated towards a world without nuclear weapons and play a leading role in advancing the international community's progress, even if only by a small step.

Last November, I met with Ambassador Harold Agyeman, the Permanent Representative of Ghana to the United Nations, who will serve as the Chair of the Third Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference from the end of this month, and pledged Japan's utmost cooperation for the success of the conference. Ambassador Agyeman also visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki and had the opportunity to learn firsthand about the realities of the atomic bombings.

Japan intends to take the recommendations received from the IEGP seriously and utilize them. We will also work closely with Ambassador Agyeman to ensure the success of the NPT review process, looking ahead to the 11th NPT Review Conference in 2026 and the future of nuclear disarmament and arms control.

Last but not least, last year, Nihon Hidankyo was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. It is extremely meaningful but at the same time, the aging of atomic bomb survivors is progressing further, and very sadly and unfortunately, the number of people who can directly testify about their experiences is decreasing year by year. Passing on the experiences and memories of the atomic bombings, as well as the experiences of the nuclear abolition movement, including years of testimony, across generations and borders, has become an urgent task.

Fortunately, we are encouraged by the growing community of young individuals who are carrying on the will of the survivors and engaging in activities that incorporate their unique perspectives and technological prowess. I sincerely hope that through the discussions at this symposium, each of you present here will deepen your understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings, as well as the severe environment surrounding international disarmament and arms control, and that the circle of civil society working towards a world without nuclear weapons will further expand.

With this wish, I will conclude my remarks. Thank you for your listening.

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