

Address by Prime Minister Kishida at the closing session
of the third meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons
for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP)

December 9, 2023
[Provisional translation]

Thank you very much for attending the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP).

I have just heard the overview of the meeting from the IGEP members. I understand that the members deeply discussed the fundamental issues that we must overcome towards a world without nuclear weapons.

The IGEP kicked off exactly one year ago with its first meeting in Hiroshima. Seventy-eight years ago, Nagasaki was destroyed by a single atomic bomb, which claimed the lives of what is said to be well over 70,000 souls. Nagasaki is also a place where prayers for eternal peace are offered.

In Nagasaki, participants from both nuclear-weapons and non-nuclear-weapons States, will renew our resolve of humankind that we must ensure that Nagasaki is the last place to suffer an atomic bombing. That is exactly the reason why the IGEP exists. In this regard, it is very significant that the members of the IGEP deepened their understanding of the reality of the atomic bombing such as through dialogues with hibakusha and members of civil society, and have a frank and candid discussion of the fundamental issues toward a nuclear disarmament.

The international community has become even more divided over how to advance nuclear disarmament. I cannot but admit that the fundamental issues toward a nuclear disarmament still lie ahead. Under such circumstances, however, it is more and more important to advance realistic and practical efforts and to build international momentum toward nuclear disarmament by continuing discussion without hesitation.

Therefore, gathering strong political will is strongly required. By taking into consideration the sage views of the IGEP, I will continue to take the leadership toward a world without nuclear weapons. Many political leaders have engaged in this meeting. I was encouraged to receive a strong message from the Honorable John Kerry, United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, with whom I worked together toward nuclear disarmament when I was Foreign Minister.

I would like to take this important meeting as a great opportunity to work together with you to reflect on a concrete path toward a world without nuclear weapons, a common ideal of humankind. I have high hopes for the sage views and cooperation of the IGEP members gathered here today.

I would like to thank once again all members of the IGEP, political leaders, and all concerned, including Mr. Oishi, Governor of Nagasaki Prefecture, and Mr. Suzuki, Mayor of Nagasaki, for their cooperation. Thank you very much.