

Opening Remarks (Video Message) by Mr. ISHIHARA Hirotaka,
Special Advisor to the Prime Minister
at the Youth Conference of the Japan Visit Programme
(Study Tour to Hiroshima and Nagasaki)
of the “Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons”
on August 29, 2024 in Hiroshima

Dear participants of the first cohort of the “Youth Leader Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons” visiting Japan, my name is Hirotaka Ishihara, Special Advisor to the Prime Minister of Japan, in charge of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issues. This study tour, which has brought together participants from more than 40 countries around the world to Nagasaki and Hiroshima, will finally come to a close with this Youth Conference and the subsequent Certification Ceremony.

I understand that you have experienced a variety of events and activities during the study tour, starting with the Opening Ceremony in Nagasaki, followed by Hibakusha Testimonies and visits to peace memorial parks and peace museums in Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

I am sure that you had lively discussions with youth in Nagasaki and Hiroshima toward the realization of a “world without nuclear weapons,” based on both what you have learned and reflected on during the online training programme and what you actually saw and felt during this study tour.

Needless to say, the international security environment has been deteriorating, and divisions within the international community over nuclear disarmament have only become greater. However, this is precisely why we must not stop taking steps toward a “world without nuclear weapons.”

I am convinced that it is very meaningful that youth like yourselves, from various historical, political, and cultural backgrounds, including nuclear-weapon states, non-nuclear-weapon states, regions affected by nuclear testings, and conflict-affected states, have invested precious time to participate in this programme. We hope that you are proud of your efforts.

As Prime Minister Kishida stated in his video message at the Opening Ceremony in Nagasaki, next year will mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As the Hibakusha are aging, the role of the younger generation, such as yourselves, is becoming even more important in conveying the realities of

nuclear weapons use to the world.

We hope that you will share what you saw and felt with your own eyes and hearts during this study tour with your family, friends, colleagues and seniors in your workplace, and your community. We also hope that you will cherish the global network you have gained through this programme and continue your efforts toward a “world free of nuclear weapons” as a member of the first cohort of a “Youth Leader for a World without Nuclear Weapons”, while serving as mentors for the second cohort of this programme.

We have also heard that the second phase of the programme will begin accepting applications in 2025. We hope you encourage those around you to apply.

As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan will continue and further strengthen its efforts for realistic and practical nuclear disarmament.

Last but not least, we would like to thank the UN officials for their efforts in creating this programme from scratch, and making this first substantial study tour possible. We would also like to thank the Hiroshima Prefecture, Hiroshima City, Nagasaki Prefecture, Nagasaki City, and the youth of Japan for their cooperation.

We hope you continue your respective wonderful journeys even after your safe return home. Thank you very much.