Even as the NPT is stalled, we move forward

——Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition Statement
on the Breakdown of the NPT Review Conference——
August 29, 2022

Condemning Russia for breaking up the conference
We are deeply disappointed and outraged that the Tenth Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has ended in failure. The NPT, which states in its preamble the need to avert the danger of nuclear war, was not able to achieve any concrete results at the very time that the world stands on the brink of such a nuclear war. Russia, a nuclear-weapon state under the NPT and a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, continues its war of aggression against the non-nuclear-weapon state Ukraine, in violation of the UN Charter and with the constant pressure of the threat of nuclear weapons. In such a context, the possibility of causing a tragic nuclear power plant disaster, and the danger of escalation into a nuclear war, are becoming a reality.
At this Review Conference, there was a wave of condemnation of Russia’s actions. Nevertheless, the Russian Government continued to attempt to justify its own acts. Russia then refused to agree with the negotiated outcome document, and broke up the conference. We strongly condemn the Russian Government.

Insincerity and arrogance of the five nuclear-weapon States
Also highlighted through this Review Conference was the insincerity of the five nuclear-weapon States, refusing to seriously face up to their disarmament obligations under Article VI of the Treaty. In the 1995 decision to indefinitely extend the NPT, the nuclear-weapon States agreed on the ultimate goal of eliminating nuclear weapons. In 2000, they called for an “unequivocal undertaking” to accomplish their total elimination, and in 2010 agreed upon an Action Plan to do so. However, the nuclear-weapon States have not made any sincere efforts toward nuclear disarmament. This attitude of the nuclear-weapon States is the root cause of the failure of the recent NPT Review Conference.
During the Conference, important proposals were made such as regarding no first use of nuclear weapons, assurances of no use or threat of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states, and the moratorium of production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Yet, the nuclear-weapon States rejected each of these proposals at every turn.
The draft Outcome Document reaffirmed past nuclear disarmament agreements, but made clear the refusal of the nuclear-weapon States to take any step further than that. The attitude of the five nuclear-weapon States can only be described as arrogant. We cannot accept the situation that the NPT has stalled for 12 years without making any substantial progress.

Hope in the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
Meanwhile, the international movement to consider the inhumanity of nuclear weapons, which has spread since the 2010 NPT Review Conference, culminated in the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) in 2017. The first Meeting of States Parties to the TPNW was held in June this year, resulting in a strong political declaration and 50-point action plan.
The nuclear-weapon States dislike these movements, and are hostile toward the TPNW. Yet, as a result of the undaunted efforts of many states and civil society, the final draft Outcome Document of the 10th NPT Review Conference still contained many references to the humanitarian consequences
nuclear weapons. Mention of the TPNW also remained, however, due to the pressure from the nuclear-weapon States, this did not include any reference to the significance of the treaty. Yet, there is hope here. As the NPT falls into dysfunction, there is a need to expand participation in and support for the TPNW, which defines nuclear weapons as the ultimate evil. Unless public opinion surrounds the nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-dependent states, the same thing will be repeated at the next NPT Review Conference, planned for 2026.

**Challenges for Japan**
The role played by the Japanese Government at this Conference was minimal. We commend Prime Minister Kishida’s participation in the Conference, his announcement of a disarmament education initiative including bringing young people from around the world to visit the a-bombed cities, and Japan’s signing the Joint Humanitarian Statement by 147 countries. However, for example, Japan did not express its support as an ally to the proposal for no first use of nuclear weapons, nor did it give any indication of a stance of reducing its own dependence on nuclear weapons.

We in Japan must also take seriously the issue of treated contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster which was repeatedly pointed out at the Review Conference, as well as the issue of armed attacks on nuclear power plants. It should also be noted that grave concerns were expressed about Australia’s introduction of nuclear submarines in relation to safeguards. Japan’s large stockpile of plutonium also remains a serious concern.

**Break free from nuclear dependence**
The threat of nuclear weapons is an urgent issue, upon which the survival of all humanity depends. The Japanese Government has explained that it will not join the TPNW because the nuclear-weapon States are not part, and that it will pursue nuclear disarmament under the NPT, which includes the nuclear-weapon States. Yet, it is now clear that the NPT alone will not realise a world free of nuclear weapons.

As long as nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-dependent states continue their policies of nuclear deterrence, which are based on the use or threat of nuclear weapons, their abolition cannot be achieved. The selfishness of countries who claim the “right to possess” or the “right to use” nuclear weapons must not be accepted. Japan should join the TPNW, and use the experience of Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a starting point to join the global movement which does not accept nuclear weapons themselves.

The Hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, whose average age now exceeds 84, have appealed for the abolition of nuclear weapons within their lifetimes. We call on the Japanese Government to sincerely heed the call of the Hibakusha, immediately change its policy, and break free from dependence on nuclear weapons.

**Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition**
**Co-Chairs**
Adachi Shuichi (Hiroshima Alliance for Nuclear Weapons Abolition)
Ito Kazuko (Human Rights Now)
Kawasaki Akira (Peace Boat/International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN))
Okubo Ken-ichi (Japan Association of Lawyers Against Nuclear Arms)
Tanaka Terumi (Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations)
Tomonaga Masao (Nagasaki Global Citizens’ Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons)