Statement by Nagasaki Mayor Tomihisa Taue

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Mr. Chairman, representatives of governments from various countries and leaders of citizens groups; I am Tomihisa Taue, mayor of Nagasaki City. As a representative of the citizens of the atomic-bombed city of Nagasaki and the vice-president of Mayors for Peace, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for this opportunity to speak to you all today.

Next year it will be 50 years since the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, or NPT, came into effect in 1970. This treaty has greatly limited the endless nuclear arms race that followed World War 2. However, the promise in Article 6 to reduce nuclear weapons has not been kept and there are still approximately 14,500 nuclear warheads in the world, the majority of which belong to the United States and Russia. In this respect, nothing has changed in 50 years.

The efforts that non-nuclear weapon states and atomic bomb survivors have made to break through this state of affairs have resulted in the forging of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. This treaty represents a light of hope for the majority of people in the world.

However, the path towards the elimination of nuclear weapons has now been closed off by our current leaders. A race to develop nuclear weapons that will be easier to use is already underway, and the risk of these weapons being employed is actually rising. The historic Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty that was ushered in at the end of the Cold War is now at risk of breaking down.

I hereby appeal to the leaders of nuclear-armed states. Please work in better faith for nuclear arms reductions in keeping with the promise you have with the world under the special status afforded you in the framework of the NPT. Please exercise your leadership and quickly begin a concrete process to reduce the threat of nuclear weapons. Above all, the U.S. and Russia have a responsibility to initiate a dialogue.

And to the representatives from many countries in attendance here, please carry through with efforts to assemble all your expertise to preserve the NPT and eliminate nuclear weapons from this earth.
The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons is a treaty that fulfills Article 6 of the NPT and provides a foundation for raising international sentiment to see that Article 6 is carried out. Please spare no efforts in having this treaty brought into effect at the earliest possible date.

2020 will mark the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings. The atomic bomb survivors hope more than anyone that no one in the world will ever again experience the horror of nuclear weapons. Now more than ever I ask that their words, as well as those of civil society, be heeded and put into action.

I conclude my speech with great anticipation that your vigorous discussions will produce a clear vision for realizing a world free of nuclear weapons in advance of next year's NPT Review Conference. Thank you for your kind attention.