



New Japan Women's
Association

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Toward 2010 NPT Review Conference

We Have a Big Opportunity for Advancing Nuclear Abolition Stand Up Together against Militarization to Create a World

Shinfujin Sends Letter to Obama Requesting Him to Visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki

For the past few years, particularly after the four former high-ranking US officials, Kissinger, Shultz, Perry and Nunn in Wall Street Journal on January 4, 2007 started advocating a "nuclear weapon-free world," we've seen positive developments in nuclear disarmament in the international arena. The New Japan Women's Association (Shinfujin), the strong advocate for nuclear abolition since its foundation 47 years ago, is now gearing up its effort to achieve the goal of collecting by the 2010 NPT Review Conference 200 million signatures in support of the petition "Toward the 2010 NPT Review Conference - Appeal for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World." This Appeal was issued on August 6, 2008, by the representatives of the peace movement assembled at the International Meeting in Hiroshima from around the world. The signature drive is under way worldwide, and the petitions will be presented to the next NPT Review Conference to be held next May in New York. The Japan Council against Atomic & Hydrogen Bombs (Japan Gensuikyo), to which



From left: Hayashi, Mr. Post, Takada, Maeda

Shinfujin has membership, has set the target of 12 million signatures.

Hearing US President Barak Obama's speech in Prague on April 5, in which he said, "as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon, the United States has a moral responsibility to act," and referred to "America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons," we felt we must respond to this historic declaration. We also felt the need to let him know that we in the movement support him and watch him if he really is to act as he promises; we wanted him to know that it is too early to say that the goal may not be reached in his lifetime. We decided to send a letter to President Obama asking him to come to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to meet Hibakusha, A-bomb survivors, and listen directly to their different stories of agony and struggle. Meeting with Hibakusha will not only give him a strong sense of duty to act but will send a strong message to the international community that US President is really serious to work for nuclear abolition.

On May 19, Shinfujin national President Kimiko TAKADA, Hiroshima Chapter President Toshiko HAYASHI, and Nagasaki Chapter President Yasuko MAEDA visited the US Embassy in Tokyo bringing the letter to President Obama signed by their names. At the US Embassy, Minister-Counselor Ronald J. Post, who is actually Deputy Chief of Mission (ranked next to the Ambassador) received the Shinfujin delegation.

In the meeting, National President Takada explained the purpose of sending a letter to President Obama: to express our support to President Obama for what

he said in Prague, and to request him to take concrete actions immediately. Hiroshima Chapter President Hayashi said that Hibakusha in Hiroshima heartily welcomed his speech, and that she wanted President to come to Hiroshima and listen to the stories of Hibakusha, which is the only way to grasp the unimaginable hardships they have gone through, particularly the deep scars in their heart they have had to live with all throughout their lifetime. Many Hibakusha, being victims themselves, have sense of guilty for having left their loved ones, neighbors or even strangers asking for help under the collapsed building or in blazing flames. Nagasaki Chapter President said that after Obama's speech in Prague, Shinfujin members in her community found that many more people are willing to sign the petition.

Hayashi gave Mr. Post three copies of "Burned like Fallen Leaves," collection of Hibakusha's testimonies Hiroshima Shinfujin publishes every year. Maeda handed him a picture-letter drawn on a Japanese paper by Shinfujin members of Nagasaki, asking him to send it to President Obama with the letter.

Mr. Post, Deputy Chief of the Mission, welcomed us by saying that women are the great strength that sustains the society, and he was very happy to receive leaders of a women's organization. After listening to the three presidents, he thanked them for visiting the embassy; he said he was very grateful that they came to let him know we heard President's speech and to express our opinion on it. He said that with his speech President Obama gave a new perspective to the world, because in the 20th century the world leaders thought nuclear weapons should be eliminated but they said it was impossible, and now in the 21st Century we have an American President who says it's possible. He then said that by achieving that goal, Hibakusha of Hiroshima and Nagasaki can finally have peace of mind, and people of the world can be confident that they never have a nuclear attack. That President Obama said those words in such an early stage of his administration and so strongly has a great meaning, he said. Mr.

Post went on to say that if the U. S. and Japan worked together, it would be possible to achieve that goal. It was particularly impressive that he said, "You have long been pursuing the goal, and now we join you."

In closing the talk, Takada referred to President Obama's words: "This goal will not be reached quickly -- perhaps not in my lifetime," and said that we NGOs would continue our work to achieve nuclear abolition, hand in hand by President Obama and other political leaders who share this goal, and we all hope that President Obama displays his will and put it into practice, paving the way for the start of the negotiations for a nuclear weapons convention in his first term.

It is almost unbelievable that political leaders are talking about a "world without nuclear weapons," or "nuclear-free world." Who would have imagined that these nuclear-minded politicians speak of what has long been an NGO term?

Now we must grab this big opportunity to press our governments to work in unison for commencing the negotiations for concluding an international treaty banning and eliminating nuclear weapons. We must get this agreed by the State Parties at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The New Japan Women's Association exerts its fullest effort to change the attitude and policy of our government, which has totally failed to keep up with the tremendous change taking place in international political world regarding nuclear abolition, and continues to beg the US to keep its nuclear umbrella open to "protect" Japan. Together with all those committed to creating a nuclear-free world, we will work to have our government play its role that deserves that of a government of the only country that experienced nuclear attack.

Sisters and brothers, let us bring our strength together to achieve a nuclear-free world in our lifetime!

Shinfujin has collected as of August 1, 2009, almost 500,000 signatures for the petition ""Toward the 2010 NPT Review Conference - Appeal for a Nuclear Weapon-Free World. Shinfujin members all over Japan have visited municipalities, meeting with mayors, officials and local council members asking for their support, as well as for their assistance to send A-bomb photo panels to the sister cities. Many local governments have welcomed this proposal, saying that it is a good way of promoting friendship and solidarity between the citizens of different countries. Some municipalities even helped Shinfujin members to send panels through official channel. Mayors of some cities of countries like Republic of Korea and Germany have written back to Shinfujin local groups thanking them for the panels and expressing their will to join the global signature campaign.