



Youth Statement

*United Nations General Assembly
High-level Meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total
Elimination of Nuclear Weapons*

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Honorable President and Excellencies,

Today, I stand before you, not just as a representative of a representative of civil society, but as a representative an entire generation. A generation, whose enthusiasm for the future, is matched only by its pragmatism for making the world a more sustainable and equal for all. And yet, I stand here before you, as a representative of a generation whose future continues to stand on the precipice of total destruction.

I'm sure everyone in this room today can remember being young and having dreams of making the world a better place.

The United Nations is built on this ideal. But, some have forgotten this idealism and their commitments to nuclear disarmament. The continued investments and modernizations of nuclear weapons are not only threats to all, but divests valuable resources away from services in education, healthcare, and development; prerequisites for a secure world.

The youth reminds all delegations that the pursuit in good faith of multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament is required by Article VI of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), as upheld by the 1996 Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice. The principle of good faith requires implementation of the obligation now, not at some point in the future. It has been 70 years, since the first UN General Assembly resolution sought to set in motion a process for the elimination of WMD and 46 years since the NPT entered into force.

Honorable President and Excellencies,

A nuclear attack would be devastating. We only need to listen to the accounts of the Hibakusha and the citizens of the Marshall Islands, who suffered from their use and testing, to understand how no state can adequately respond to an emergency caused by such weapons.

We simply cannot keep our heads in the sand. If we do, then we continue to trust those that tell us that these weapons keep us safe, that they will never be used again, and that they are a deterrent. Perhaps, these arguments veered several states off the path of peace in the first place and contributed to the stagnation of the NPT regime and UN disarmament machinery.

Honorable President and Excellencies,

We live in a highly interdependent world where the actions of one can affect us all. Even if we choose only to seek our own national interest, in today's globalized world, this cannot be achieved without cooperating beyond our borders. Action must be based on the shared trust and respect for our world, for each other, for the environment and for humanity.

We, the youth, welcome the outcome report from the Opened-Ended Working Group on Nuclear Disarmament, which recommends that the General Assembly commence negotiations in 2017 on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, leading to their elimination.

In closing, as I speak here today, we find ourselves in time where tensions amongst nations are on the rise, knowing full well that the task before us is not an easy one. However, a diplomat has one word in his heart; continue. All of us here today, delegation and civil society, are diplomats to the cause of nuclear disarmament. I not only encourage but also implore everyone here today to continue to persevere forward. There will be no shortages of obstacles to overcome, but together we can overcome them. A star shines brightest when surrounded by darkness. It is during our most trying times that we've proven that we can rise to the occasion.

Thank you