**Message from Mayor Kazumi Matsui of Hiroshima**

**on the Occasion of the International Day Against Nuclear Tests**

***Presented by Honorary Mayor Thore Vestby, Frogn, Norway***

**Astana, Kazakhstan**

**29 August 2016**

 I am deeply honoured today to extend this message of support on the occasion of this year’s International Day Against Nuclear Tests.  As President of Mayors for Peace, I am pleased that Mayor Thore Vestby of Frogn, Norway, has agreed to convey this message of goodwill on behalf of myself and the 7,114 member cities of our organization.

I wish first of all to congratulate the government and people of the Republic of Kazakhstan for their vision in establishing this International Day as an annual event.  It is fitting that Kazakhstan would host this particular meeting, given all of the tragic humanitarian and environmental consequences it has faced from several decades of nuclear tests in this proud and beautiful country.

This year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).  In the years that have passed, a whole new generation of young people has appeared amongst us.  These are people who have never experienced a crisis involving the possible use of nuclear weapons—many view such weapons as an anachronistic legacy of the Cold War.  Some are even surprised to learn that such weapons still exist at all.

Yet young and old alike continue their efforts in country after country to advance the great cause of global nuclear disarmament.  They understand that the very act of “testing” a nuclear explosive device is a provocation, an invitation to further nuclear weapon proliferation, a source of regional instability, a threat to the environment, and above all, a symbolic and practical means of perpetuating the continued existence of such weapons.  People today are continuing to ask how testing can occur at all if the widely accepted internationally agreed goal is the elimination of such weapons.  Why test what should not exist in the first place?

It is noteworthy in this respect that the preambles of the Partial Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and the CTBT each associated the end of nuclear tests with the larger causes of nuclear disarmament, general and complete disarmament, and international peace and security overall.

A test ban, therefore, is much more than a ban on tests—it is an essential means to set the stage for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.  A global nuclear test ban helps to build confidence that no country is seeking either to acquire or to improve nuclear weapons.

My organization, Mayors for Peace, has a special interest in nuclear disarmament and the outlawing of nuclear tests because our members realize very well that if such weapons are ever used again, cities will be the likely targets.  They know that city citizens are completely unprotected against any such attacks.  They understand that the effects of these weapons would also cripple or eliminate any kind of emergency response to such a humanitarian calamity on the order of those suffered by the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and their survivors, many of whom continue to require medical attention even today.

This is why mayors across the globe are joining the cause to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons and, as an important vehicle to advance towards that goal, strongly support the nuclear test ban. The CTBT needs to be implemented.  By outlawing nuclear tests, we will go far in de-legitimizing both nuclear tests and nuclear weapons, and bring us closer to celebrating an International Day Marking the Achievement of a World Free of Nuclear Weapons.

In this context, Mayors for Peace encourages leaders around the world to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki to witness firsthand the horrific humanitarian consequences of the atomic bombings. As they visit these cities, we hope for them to see, hear, feel, think, and most of all, form an unshakable determination to advance towards a world free of nuclear weapons. It is our earnest hope that these leaders will start acting on behalf of nuclear disarmament with a profound understanding of the wishes of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which stem from the *Hibakusha*’s deep humanitarian conviction that “no one else shall ever again suffer as we have.”

Mayors for Peace, together with a wide range of civil society partners, wholeheartedly supports such initiatives as we believe that doing so will serve the interest of our citizens and, indeed, all humanity. We will also intensify our efforts to nurture an international environment that transcends differences and fosters the creation of common values in order to help world leaders to take bold steps towards nuclear disarmament.

Consolidated efforts by state and city governments, parliamentarians, together with wide spectrum of civil society partners, such as women, youth, scholars, lawyers, religious leaders, doctors, artists, environmentalists, and human rights activists, can change the world.

We encourage everyone to join in these important efforts. Let us work together to finish this important job.