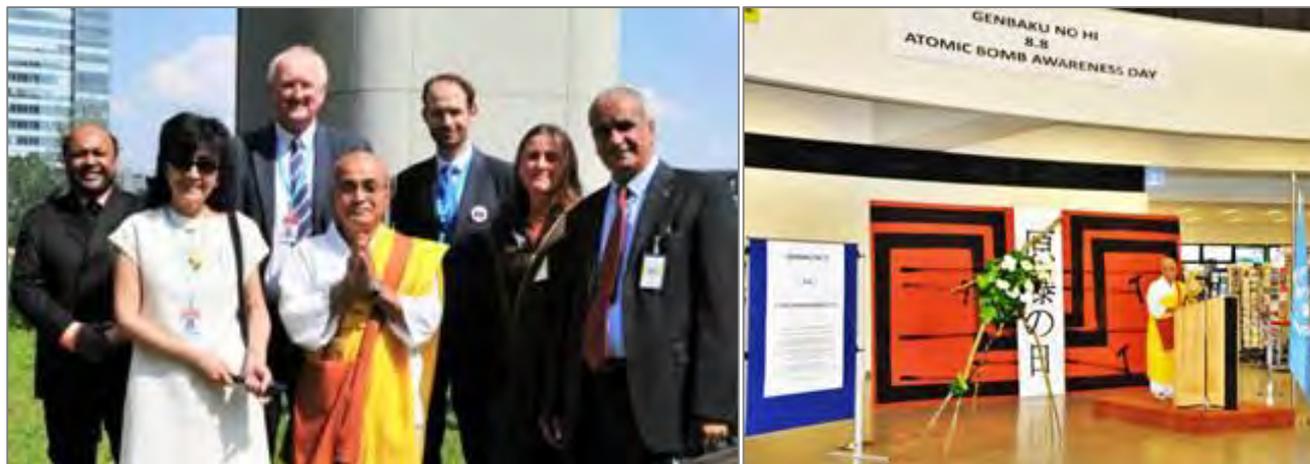


Atomic Bomb Awareness Day Observed at the UN in Vienna

Vienna, Austria, 8. August 2014



UPF An Atomic Bomb Awareness Day (Genbaku-No-Hi) observance took place at the International Centre in Vienna on August 8, 2014. It was co-hosted by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and organized by UPF-Austria, the Academic Council of the United Nations System, and event founder Yuko Gulda.

[For photos click here.](#)

Ms. Yuko Gulda, an Austro-Japanese artist and widow of a famous Austrian pianist, developed the initiative hoping to inspire people to take responsibility to create a better world for their children. Activities included the ringing of the Peace Bell at the Memorial Plaza, an origami corner and examples of ikebana (Japanese flower arrangements).

The annual event calls for a prohibition of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and encourages people to take responsibility in order to create a better world for their children.

The following speeches were given:



Yuko Gulda, founder, Genbaku no hi

This August, we have gathered here again to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Genbaku no hi Ceremony in the United Nations at Vienna. This year, I would like to

announce two pieces of good news. and one sad news.

Mr. Norbert Scheed, mayor of the 22th Vienna District, has passed away all of sudden at the age of 51. He was a politician with amazing idealism and was filled with

human integrity. His early and unexpected death is a huge loss for everybody who has known Norbert Scheed. Also for me, he was the one who encouraged and supported me. Norbert, now you have to watch it from the heaven.

The first of good news is about a letter from Kenzaburo Oe, the Nobel Prize laureate in Literature who, as you may know, has always worked for peace in Japan. He encouraged me and the activities of Genbaku no hi. And he also signed our petition. I will be truly happy if each one of you would join him in signing this petition. You will find a copy on a table in the origami corner. There is also a copy on our web site. www.genbaku-no-hi.com.

The other good thing is that we now have a place to erect a monument. The monument will stand in the 22nd district's cherry blossom park in Vienna. Its opening is scheduled for April 2015.

Finally, I would like to inform you that this event will be continued by my friends after this year. I wish to hand this mission down to a younger generations so it can continue to develop further in the future.



Mr. Pericles Gasparini, Acting Chief, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, Vienna

I am honored to represent the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Vienna, and follow the tradition of

supporting the NGO community in organizing the Atomic Bomb Awareness Day at the Vienna International Centre. The GENBAKU NO HI is a

commemoration of the catastrophic events in Hiroshima and Nagasaki that happened August 6 and 9, 1945. These events continue to stand as a reminder of the immense suffering and the dire humanitarian consequences caused by the use of nuclear weapons.

On August 6 the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Angela Kane, delivered a special message from the UN Secretary-General at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony, demonstrating his personal interest and commitment in highlighting the importance in eliminating nuclear weapons.

Disarmament is one of the oldest goals in the United Nations. In January 1946, the first resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly called for “the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.”

Sixty-nine years later, we are still working on the challenges presented by nuclear disarmament. Over 75,000 nuclear weapons were estimated to exist in the late 1980s. Today, this number is believed to be around 16,000.

Yet, the effort to achieve global nuclear disarmament is still a work in progress. Well-funded, long-range nuclear weapon modernization programs are underway – but nuclear disarmament negotiations are not. Long after the end of the Cold War, thousands of such weapons remain on high alert. And most of humanity still lives in countries that either have nuclear weapons or belong to a nuclear alliance.

Let me mention three main areas that need attention in order to change the status quo:

1. We need a change in paradigm to deal with nuclear disarmament:

There are already some encouraging signs that nuclear weapons are increasingly being viewed throughout the world community in a negative light. While some States continue to regard them as vital to their security, most UN Member States – backed by numerous groups in civil society – view such weapons as repugnant because of the catastrophic consequences of using them. Even former military and defense personnel have admitted that such weapons serve no useful military purpose and are more of a risk than a benefit.

The growing interest in the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons was the focus of major international conferences in Oslo, Norway and Nayarit, Mexico in March 2013 and February 2014, respectively. Another such conference will convene in December 2014 in Vienna. What we are seeing is the emergence of a new way of looking at nuclear weapons – a new paradigm that questions the compatibility of nuclear weapons with international humanitarian and human rights laws. New thinking is confronting old weapons and this is

something upon which to build future disarmament initiatives.

2. The second initiative should involve expanded efforts to end the stalemate in the UN disarmament machinery – in particular the Disarmament Commission, the General Assembly’s First Committee and the Conference on Disarmament. The meetings last year of the General Assembly’s open-ended working group on taking forward multilateral disarmament negotiations was an important step in this direction and I am sure we will witness many other such initiatives in the future.

3. We need to do more to promote education on disarmament and non-proliferation issues. The world community has a long history of efforts to deepen the public’s understanding of the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and the benefits of eliminating them. Much of this work was reinforced by the 2006 UN Study on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education. Universities, specialized institutions and NGOs have contributed to this awareness by offering courses dealing with many of the practical challenges of achieving disarmament and non-proliferation goals.

If we truly wish the next generation (represented by the youth, as we see here and around the world) to be the last to live under the shadow of nuclear war, we must do more to ensure that they have the information and understanding necessary to change nuclear disarmament from a desirable goal to an accomplished fact – and education will be indispensable in meeting this need.

Here in Vienna, various educational programs and publications of the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) have helped to bring this treaty close to universal membership. They have promoted the treaty by stimulating a growing number of stakeholders, particularly from civil society, scientists and many others to embark on initiatives to ban nuclear testing.

Meanwhile, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, CTBTO and other entities such as the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) are jointly developing an online course platform that will address a wider range of disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

These three initiatives have the potential to inject new political momentum to our collective aspirations. In recognizing both the ordeals of the survivors of two nuclear attacks and the interests of future generations, we must all redouble our efforts to achieve the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We all know this work will not be easy. The road we have traveled has been difficult, often with unexpected sharp turns and obstacles along the way, but the journey ahead is surely one we must complete.

UNODA's support to today's event is another way that the UN highlights the importance of striving for a world free of nuclear weapons. I would personally like to thank each and every one of you for coming to this event, particularly the young generation – for it provides further evidence that our journey is continuing.



Mr. Thomas Mützelburg, Public Information Section, CTBTO [Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-ban Treaty Organization

The suffering of the victims of Hiroshima and

Nagasaki was unspeakable. Some were vaporized immediately; others left in agony for hours, days, weeks or longer.

Why is it so important to remember? Is the aim to blame those who dropped the bombs? Nuclear weapons are the product of a chapter in human history so dark and inhumane that it is hard to grasp for most of us who were born after the Second World War. It's important to remember so that we can learn for the future. To make ours the credo of the survivors of the bombings, the Hibakusha: "Never again."

Equally hard to grasp is the destructive power of the nuclear weapons developed after "Little Boy" and "Fat Man." To put it into scale: if the destructive force of the Hiroshima bomb were represented by the space occupied by this lectern, a thermonuclear bomb would be the entire Rotunda. Cold War strategists counted casualties in "megadeaths," the unit for one million victims.

As long as nuclear weapons remain, so does the risk that they will be detonated - whether as a test, accidentally or intentionally.

1. The risk of nuclear testing. Around 500 atmospheric tests conducted since 1945 exposed whole populations to radioactive fallout, while many of the 1,500 underground tests left the soil contaminated and the ground water threatened for thousands of years. The UN General Assembly Resolution has established August 29 as the International Day against Nuclear Tests "to avert devastating and harmful effects on the lives and health of people and the environment." Here in the Rotunda, an art exhibition and a reception hosted by the Permanent Mission of Kazakhstan will mark this International Day.

2. Accidents and nuclear near misses. During the Cold War, the superpowers' early warning systems on both

sides erroneously indicated a nuclear attack from the other side on more than one occasion. In 1983, for example, a lonely decision by Soviet Lieutenant Colonel Stanislav Yevgrafovich avoided an all-out nuclear war. His computer indicated incoming U.S. missiles – which later turned out to be sunlight glinting off U.S. territory which a satellite saw as missile flares. There are numerous cases where nuclear weapons were damaged, lost, misplaced or even dropped from airplanes by mistake. By sheer luck none of them detonated – so far. For the United States, the Pentagon's official list of "broken arrows" mentions 32 accidents with nuclear weapons that posed a potential threat to the public.

3. Intentional use. And then there is a remote but not impossible chance that one day, a nuclear weapon might fall into the hands of non-state actors. Imagine for a second what this would mean for the bitter conflicts that we follow in the news today. A recent study by the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War concludes that the most likely way to die from nuclear explosions is actually...from starvation: a limited nuclear conflict using only a tiny fraction of the world's nuclear arsenal could cause a global nuclear winter lasting for a quarter of a century, potentially starving a quarter of the world's population.

Nuclear weapons therefore pose a security risk to all; in the long run, they even pose a threat to their own possessors. The Japanese people were far-sighted in categorically interpreting "never again" as a rejection of all nuclear weapons, in anyone's possession – and not as "never again another nuclear attack on Japan" by seeking their own nuclear deterrence.

When CTBTO Executive Secretary Lassina Zerbo visited Japan last year to lay wreaths at the memorial sites of both cities and speak to the Hibakusha, he stressed: "The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, Hiroshima and Nagasaki share common objectives. The CTBT will be a first step towards making sure that what happened to Hiroshima will never happen again."

The Treaty's no test-norm effectively hampers the first-time development of nuclear weapons as well as the development of more destructive ones. While legally not yet in force, the CTBT has created an almost universal norm that most countries would feel ashamed to violate. The CTBTO verification regime is nearly complete and sure to detect any attempt to hide a nuclear test.

But as long as nuclear weapons exist, we are not safe. We cannot and should not rest. This is why remembering the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki is so important for our own future.