

I would like to begin by thanking the organizers for having invited me. My name is Lisa Clark and I am currently the Co-President of the International Peace Bureau, an old organization, founded in the early 1890s, to establish a permanent network among the peace movements from different countries. In the late 19th century they were mostly European and North American, but today the IPB has over 300 member organizations in all continents, including Nihon Hidankyo and Gensuikyo, the organizers of this World Conference.

IPB is dedicated to the vision of a world without war.

This year we are here, all of us, full of excitement thanks to the vote at the United Nations last 7 July. 122 States approved the text of a Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons, an achievement that all of us – and many others throughout the world – have worked towards for years! This success has given us new energies.

The Treaty has opened the door to a new age of possible disarmament policies. Reading the Preamble to the Treaty, I get the impression that the intention is even broader: to go back to the origins of the United Nations, the multilateral institution guaranteeing peace through diplomacy and rule of law. The entire process that led to the successful approval of the Ban Treaty is modelled on nonviolent methods of citizen's diplomacy, conducted with the creativity that characterizes nonviolent struggles.

To change the perspective of the debate is a prime tool of nonviolent conflict resolution. And what was done in the Humanitarian Initiative was modelled on this and on the decades-long campaign of the Hibakushas. Rejecting the geopolitical narrative of the powers that wage wars and their stories of how such dreadful weapons can contribute to security, we looked at nuclear weapons from the point of view of their unacceptable consequences. And, as we joined the Hibakushas in saying "No More Hiroshimas! No More Nagasakis!", today we are able to say that nuclear weapons are not merely immoral, but finally also illegal.

Once again, we can begin by saying "We, the Peoples..."

The Treaty's Preamble firmly binds this agreement to the original spirit of the United Nations charter and to the major disarmament achievements of the past seventy years.

Nuclear disarmament in itself is one of the founding objectives of the United Nations, as shown by its very first resolution, recalled in the Preamble. So now, I feel we can clearly say that nuclear weapons and the spirit of the United Nations are incompatible.

Not one of humanity's problems – climate change, extreme poverty, water shortage, epidemics, violent extremism and terrorism – can be solved by nuclear weapons. The funds spent on nuclear weapons are stolen from social and environmental programmes.

Although the new Treaty does not abolish nuclear weapons, it creates a new climate conducive to elimination. It strengthens the alliance of civil society, peace movements, and governments that achieved this result.

It is our task to ensure that governments understand that they can no longer consider themselves superior because they possess nuclear weapons. Those are now weapons prohibited by international law, although the States that possess them are not (yet) obliged to get rid of them.

The world's peace movements must now engage in a whole range of activities to make the Ban Treaty reality, once it opens for signatures on 20 September, organizing campaigns to promote treaty ratification, bearing in mind that many smaller (and poorer) countries may be harassed by the world's nuclear-armed States. We must also campaign to convince reluctant governments within NATO countries and nuclear-umbrella States, for the loud and clear voice of the people on this issue will in the end make it impossible for governments to ignore civil society's demands. And we also need to increase pressure on nuclear-armed States: our campaigns should be based on the same principles that enabled us – the majority of the world's population – to achieve the Ban Treaty. The survival of humanity and of the planet is not compatible with the continued existence of nuclear weapons.

I live in Italy, not just a NATO country, but one of those that hosts US nuclear weapons on its territory. Over the years we have led many campaigns to get those weapons removed, but have never succeeded. We came to realize that the reason was that successive Italian governments, of all political colours, did not want to give up the superiority that they felt those weapons gave to our country. Since the Humanitarian Initiative began we have been trying to convince the Italian government to participate in the process: we have based our campaign on the notion that Italy, culturally, has always been a promoter of progress in disarmament. We have said: We are very proud of Italy when she respects her Constitution (a Constitution that rejects war as a means of settling international disputes – our Article 11 is similar to your Article 9), when she leads the worldwide campaign to abolish the death penalty or the campaign to ban landmines and cluster munitions.

We have a history of peace activism in our cities and local communities in Italy. The Mayor of my city, Florence, in the 1950s and 60s, was Giorgio La Pira. After having

supported anti-Fascism during World War II he devoted his energies to working for peace internationally. The bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki made him come to the conclusion that no State must ever again be allowed to destroy a city. He believed that cities are the model for coexistence and conflict resolution that States should follow. For cities do not have armies: they learn how to solve their problems without using weapons.

Cities do not have armies or possess weapons of mass destruction

In Italy, almost 500 cities are members of Mayors for Peace, and many of those Mayors and city administrators are part of the campaign demanding that the Italian government join the new Treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Our Italian campaign is going to have a 2-week action drive next month, from 20 September to 4 October. In May this year we welcomed the Peace Boat in Sardinia and would be very happy to welcome more visits from Japanese nuclear disarmament activists.

At an international level, the International Peace Bureau is asking all its members to promote actions to convince States to sign and ratify. We could introduce a recommendation on the need to sign and ratify the Treaty in all international statements: this was a practice used to convince States to ratify the International Criminal Court, and to endorse specific human rights and disarmament conventions.

The International Peace Bureau played an important role in the 1990s, when the International Court of Justice was asked to give its opinion on the legality of nuclear weapons. Now, we could conduct other such campaigns: for example, an appeal to amend the Statute of the International Criminal Court to make the use of nuclear weapons a war crime.

Let's think together how we can develop a worldwide campaign. Ideas and creativity are needed. We need to plan actions of all different kinds, so that each one of our movements can feel that they are actively promoting the banning of nuclear weapons, implementing actions and slogans compatible with the customs and culture of their own people.

Let's seize the momentum created by the approval of the Ban Treaty. The IPB with its over 300 member organizations will actively support and accompany this process. Each one of our groups and movements must build on the enthusiasm of this moment. You, in Japan, will redouble your efforts at sharing the legacy of the Hibakusha, at opposing the militarism of foreign bases. We, in Italy, shall build on the history we are proud of (the first modern state to abolish the death penalty, the peaceful Constitution we share with Japan). And the IPB will enable us all to make the most of our active networks, for a culture of peace.