

Speaking notes

CTBTO Spokesperson Annika Thunborg

ATOMIC BOMB MEMORIAL DAY 7 AUGUST 2009

I visited Nagasaki in August 1996, on the 51<sup>st</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings. As for everyone who visits Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it was a harrowing and unforgettable experience.

One of the Hibakushas took me on a guided tour through the city, its peace museum, peace park and memorials. He told me his story: He was in his early 20s, and he worked in one of the war factories, that ironically enough may not have been destroyed if the Nagasaki bomb had been dropped where it was intended, in the centre of the city. The bomb blast reduced the factory to a burning inferno. Most of his colleagues either died instantly or were dying of their burns and injuries. He was one of the few lucky ones: by chance he had stood behind a solid pillar which had protected him from the blast. When he regained consciousness, his first thought was to try to get back to his family, which lived on the other side of the city. For days, he walked through the hot rubble and burning ruins that his city had become. He saw the blackened corpses of men and animals, and tried to help the burnt and injured victims who would die within the first week, or the ones who managed to survive but with injuries that would never heal. He reached his home, and he was lucky a second time: his family had survived, ironically enough since they would have been killed had the bomb been dropped closer to the centre of the city as intended.

My guide was in his 70s in 1996. He had devoted his life to peace work, to make sure that the nuclear bomb was never used again, but also to make sure that militarization would never occur again. He, together with all the other survivors and eyewitnesses to the horrors of World War II, are now advancing into old age. The atomic bomb experience has faded into the mist of memory. The role of the

Hibakushas to inform younger generations about the misery of war and the horror of the atomic bombs need to be preserved, through documentaries, archives, and literature.

Everyone who works with national or international peace and security issues around the world, should visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and their peace museums at least once in their lifetime.

There is another thing we can learn from the Hibakushas, and that is their renouncement of the culture of revenge, and their renouncement of nuclear deterrence. The Hibakushas don't want anyone to have to experience what they experienced. Every explosion, every nuclear test, that has been conducted after the bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, is for the Hibakushas a painful reminder of what happened to them. What happened to them has happened to others through the nuclear testing, and could happen to others as long as nuclear weapons exist, as long as nuclear explosions are carried out.

The same year I went to Nagasaki, in 1996, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty opened for signature. The Treaty bans all nuclear test explosions on Earth, as well as any other nuclear explosion. The Treaty was a milestone. Between 1945 and 1996, more than 2000 nuclear tests were carried out by the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, France and China. Testing took place all over the world from the American southwest to the Kazakh steppe, from the Algerian desert to the Arctic Ocean, from the Australian inland and the Pacific islands, to Xinjiang.

With the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, an international norm against nuclear testing was established. The moratoria have been upheld ever since, with the exception of the six tests carried out by India and Pakistan in 1998 and by North Korea in 2006 and 2009.

We at the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) here in Vienna are building a verification regime to make sure that no nuclear explosions will go unnoticed. The system is 75% complete and has already proven its worth through the detection of the tests by North Korea in 2006 and in 2009.

Nearly 150 countries or more than three-fourths of all countries in the world have already endorsed the Treaty. This includes all of Europe, most of Latin America, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific, and the nuclear weapon States Russia, France and the United Kingdom.

Today, the United States has retaken its lead on these issues. During his landmark speech in Prague in April this year, President Barack Obama pledged to immediately and aggressively pursue US ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, to work with the US Senate in this regard, and with other key countries to make sure that the Treaty enters into force and becomes fully operational. Other key countries have promised to follow suit or are watching these developments closely.

The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a first, visible step on the road towards a nuclear-weapon free world. Together with other important treaties and arrangements, the CTBT will help build a stable framework to ensure that nuclear weapons not only will become but will remain a matter of the past. Meanwhile, the stories from those who died and from those who survived the nightmares of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki must be kept alive in our minds and actions. This is our duty and responsibility. And only in this way can we make sure that such a catastrophe will never happen again.