



30th April 2013

Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan,
Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

**Statement of Protest against the Refusal to Sign the Joint Statement
on Humanitarian Impacts of Nuclear Weapons**

On 24th April 2013, at the NPT Preparatory Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, a statement was presented on behalf of more than 70 states, highlighting the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The Japanese Government had been contacted and requested to sign this joint statement, yet refused the proposal. This decision by the Japanese Government is a choice to forget and dismiss the fact that Japan has directly experienced the tragic impact of nuclear, and made a commitment never to let the same thing happen again. It is also an act that insults and tramples upon the feelings of the people whose lives and health were destroyed by nuclear weapons and “the peaceful use” of nuclear power, and who are still suffering from the effects of radiation.

According to media reports, the Japanese Government stated that “the line (in the joint statement) that says that nuclear weapons should be ‘never used again, under any circumstances’ is incompatible to the foreign policies of Japan”, and pointed to Japan’s reliance to the U.S. “Nuclear Umbrella” as a reason of the refusal to sign the joint statement. However, peace cannot be protected by nuclear weapons. History itself is a proof that there is no point in trying to intimidate other countries by massive armament, as it will only be met with opposing reactions and lead to an endless arms race, in addition to worsening international relationship. We know that Japan is a country which chose not to take such a path. Japan has recognized that “all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want” (Preamble, the Constitution of Japan), and declared to “forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes” (Article 9, the Constitution of Japan).

The YWCA of Japan has worked with the people who survived the atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 and are still suffering from physical and psychological damages. We have been working on anti-nuclear programs based on our concerns for people who were affected by the nuclear weapons testing conducted around the world

including the South Pacific area, and those who lived near the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant at the time of its disastrous accident in 2011, and are struggling to continue their daily lives despite the fear and uncertainty, or were forced to evacuate to other areas. Peace is something that dwells in the life of each individual, so small that they are invisible on the map. “Nuclear” is not a diplomatic tool. It destroys peace, where each person can live a safe and healthy life with families and loved ones. What is lost can never be restored.

The joint statement, pointing out the inhumanity of “nuclear” and calling for a world where nuclear weapons are never used again under any circumstances, is a positive step forward for the sake of all human beings and creatures on the earth. The YWCA of Japan strongly protests against the rejection of the Japanese Government to sign this joint statement. We earnestly request the Japanese Government to join the international efforts to abolish nuclear weapons, and act as its driving force.

Sincerely yours,



Naoko Matano
President
YWCA of Japan



Mikako Nishihara
General Secretary
YWCA of Japan