

**Statement by Peace Boat  
to the Second Meeting of States Party on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons  
(A victim-centered approach for international cooperation on Articles 6 and 7)**

To be delivered by Rika Watanabe, International coordinator, Peace Boat

Mr President, esteemed delegates,

On behalf of Japan-based international NGO Peace Boat, working since 1983 with nuclear impacted communities in Japan and around the world, we welcome the efforts of the informal working group on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation and assistance, including its involvement of civil society organizations, and we commend the leadership of the Co-Chairs, Kazakhstan and Kiribati.

In this statement, we would like to outline our recommendations regarding the importance of a victim-centered approach for international cooperation on Articles 6 and 7. These are based on Peace Boat's decades of experience working with over 170 hibakusha in the "Global Voyage for a Nuclear-Free World: Peace Boat Hibakusha Project." They are also based on the joint recommendations of Japanese civil society which were first presented at the 1st Meeting of States Parties in 2022. These recommendations share key lessons from Japan's experiences with victims of the use and testing of nuclear weapons. These include the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the exposure of Japanese fishing boats to radioactive fallout from nuclear tests in the Pacific, and information exchange and support activities for nuclear victims in other States.

From this experience, and building upon discussions of the informal working group, Peace Boat notes two particular areas that require international attention for the near term. One is how to recognize and assess the needs of affected people and communities. The other is how the proposed international trust fund should work to meet those needs.

Firstly, to effectively assess the needs of affected people, it is important to understand the multidimensional nature of nuclear harm. The harm caused by radiation is lifelong. The risk of low dose exposure to radiation should not be downplayed, and the impact of internal exposure should also be considered. Children who were orphaned by the atomic bombs experienced difficulties in their lives, and women particularly suffered discrimination. As the families of hibakusha faced difficulties, they can also therefore be considered nuclear victims.

The Japanese government set a narrow definition for the scope of suffering and also for eligibility for relief. The survivors themselves have taken action for their rights to be recognised, by for example filing lawsuits. These include suits for the recognition of A-bomb disease, for the recognition as hibakusha of people exposed to radioactive fallout through "black rain," and for survivors of non-Japanese nationalities to also receive the same relief measures as Japanese nationals.

These efforts show why input on victim assistance must be from a broad range of victims and stakeholders, and that such discussions should be open to all who consider themselves nuclear victims. Many such people may belong to marginalized communities within their own countries, and this has been further concealed under systems of power such as colonialism and racism, including in the case of Indigenous communities.

Secondly, the International Trust Fund for victim assistance and environmental remediation will be necessary not only to assist States Parties in implementing their obligations under Article 6, but will also help to facilitate research on the needs and practices of affected people. We believe that this fund could also be supported not only by States Parties, but by all States, international organizations, and civil society organizations. Furthermore, those eligible for assistance should not be limited to those from States Parties, but should include nuclear victims anywhere in the world.

For example, after the atomic bombings of Japan, many A-bomb survivors returned to the Korean Peninsula, which had been under Japanese colonial rule. Many others emigrated to the Pacific, as well as to North and South America, amidst the difficulties of post-war life. Similar cross-border movement and migration has also taken place after nuclear testing. International cooperation and information sharing is needed between States that are party to the Treaty and otherwise, and we hope for the creation of a framework for cooperation between States regardless of their status in regards to the TPNW.

Peace Boat emphasizes that a victim-centered approach, with consultation of people affected by nuclear weapons, is key. Only when this is centered can we ensure that the needs of affected people and communities can be met, that victims worldwide receive the assistance they deserve, and that we can prevent more people suffering nuclear harm in the future.