



8TH MAYORS FOR PEACE CONFERENCE AND 64TH HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI A-BOMB ANNIVERSARY PEACE CEREMONIES



Official report of proceedings:

Mayors for Peace have 3047 members
from 134 countries.

August 5th, 2009 - Hiroshima

Peace Park visit and official welcome:

The NFLA Chair, Baillie George Regan, and the NFLA Secretary, Sean Morris, were given a tour of the Hiroshima Peace Park, including the Hiroshima A-bomb memorial site.



In the evening the NFLA Secretary, as Manchester City Council's representative, attended a welcome dinner with other Mayors for Peace Executive Cities, a large number of Ambassadors to Japan and other esteemed guests, including the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, the President of the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Disarmament Commissioner (on behalf of the UN Secretary General).

This was followed by attendance at a 'Concert for Peace' in the Hiroshima Conference Hall, where Mayors for Peace cities and Ambassadors were special guests for the second half performance of Faure's 'Requiem'.

August 6th, 2009 – Hiroshima



Hiroshima Peace Ceremony:

The NFLA Secretary & the NFLA Chair were amongst official guests of honour at the 64th anniversary of the Hiroshima atomic bombing. The moving ceremony included remembering all those of the 'Hibakuska' (A-bomb survivors) who had died in the previous year. The NFLA Secretary laid a wreath with the Mayor of Ypres and a representative of the Mayor of Florence.

The Mayor of Hiroshima gave the 2009 Hiroshima Peace Declaration, uniquely using English to finish his speech: "We have the power. We have the responsibility. We are the Obamajority. Together we can abolish nuclear weapons. Yes we can."

Also speaking at the ceremony were the Prime Minister of Japan, the UN Disarmament Commissioner – providing a statement from the UN Secretary General - and the President of the UN General Assembly. Children also gave a peace address and a children's choir sang a peace song. The ceremony was covered live on all Japanese television and radio networks and received worldwide media coverage.

Following the ceremony, the Mayors for Peace delegation was given a guided tour of the Hiroshima Peace Museum, which includes graphic and moving images and items from the A-bombings. It also explains the nuclear age and the work of Mayors for Peace.

The Hiroshima Peace Ceremony is attended by thousands of people from across Japan and the world. Children are particularly well represented and the Hiroshima 'Peace Smile' group asked the NFLA Chair and Secretary to take part (right). Around 20,000 people attended the Hiroshima Peace ceremony.



August 7th, 2009 – Nagasaki



Flower Ceremony:

Following onward train travel to Nagasaki, the NFLA Chair and Secretary were invited to attend the Nagasaki Flower Ceremony at the 'hypocentre' monument in the city – the exact location where the H-bomb hit.

The Flower Ceremony remembers the spirits of all those who died in the bomb and all Mayors for Peace city members laid flowers, including the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (left).

The Mayors for Peace delegation were then taken to the Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Peace Museum and given a talk by a Nagasaki 'Hibakuska', who gave a moving account of his experience.

Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Campaign Board Meeting:

The Mayors for Peace 2020 Vision Board and General Meeting took place later in the afternoon. The NFLA Secretary represented the Lord Mayor of Manchester at this meeting, which included Mayors or representatives from Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Hannover (Germany), Granollers (Spain), Florence, Waitakere (New Zealand), Halabja (Iraq), Biograd na Moru (Croatia) and Malakoff (France). Apologies were given by the cities of Volgograd (Russia) and Akron (USA). The Board Meeting was chaired by the Mayor of Ypres (Belgium), who provides the Secretariat of the 2020 Vision. Mayor Akiba chaired the General Meeting. This campaign seeks to introduce to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Conference a copy of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol, committing states to the signing and bring into force of a Nuclear Weapons Convention by 2015 and the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons by 2020.

The meeting had considerable discussion on the strategy of encouraging national states to table the Protocol before the 2010 NPT Conference, which is being organised through a series of meetings in the autumn. The Campaign Association's statutes were also amended to conform with Belgian law. Manchester remains a member of the Board. With the major expansion of Mayors for Peace membership, to over 3000 towns and cities, it was also agreed to seek Associate Members from the continents of Africa, South America and the Indian Sub-continent. Considerable discussion took place over increasing the budget in order to continue to build momentum of Mayors for Peace. The meeting agreed that a voluntary invoice would be sent to all members asking for them to consider payment according to a scheme that takes into account the per capita wealth of their nations and the populations of their city or at whatever level they could afford. The Mayor of Ypres noted that if every city paid the small sum of 100 euros then the organisation would match the expenditure of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

In the evening a formal reception was held opening the 8th Mayors for Peace Conference. At the reception the Mayor of Hiroshima received an award from the African Council of Churches for the work of Mayors for Peace in creating a more peaceful world. The reception had attendees from West Africa, Iraq (a large delegation of 17 Mayors from the Kurdish part of Iraq), Israel, Kuwait, several European cities, representatives of the USA Conference of Mayors, New Zealand and from across Japan. The NFLA Secretary had the privilege of giving the closing address and giving a toast.

August 8th, 2009 – Nagasaki

Mayors for Peace Executive Conference Board Meeting:

The Mayors for Peace Executive Board is made up of the Cities who take a leadership role in the organisation. The Executive Conference Board meeting takes place every 2 Years, prior to the General Conference and once in between.



At this meeting, the following cities were elected as Executive Cities for 2009 – 2013: Hiroshima (President) and Nagasaki, Hannover, Malakoff, Manchester, Mantinlupa (Philippines), Volgograd, Akron, Florence, Ypres, Biograd na Moru, Waitakere, Granollers, Halabja and Brussels. The latter 6 cities are new Executive cities and replace Christchurch and Laakdal (Belgium).

The meeting, and the following General Conference then approved the Mayors for Peace Action Plan, with the following main actions:

Priority activities -

- Work towards the adoption of the Hiroshima-Nagasaki Protocol at the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
- Promote the UN International Decade for Disarmament 2010 – 2020.
- Promote the role of cities and municipal associations in participatory diplomacy related to peace, disarmament and international affairs (this included participating in a number of UN conferences and working with local government associations). This also includes taking a Mayors for Peace delegation to the 2010 NPT Conference in New York and establishing a Special Conference in Hiroshima in August 2010 to look at the actions required as a result of the NPT.
- Strengthen collaboration with campaign partners and promote grassroots petition drive (this includes working with relevant similar groups involved with landmines, chemical weapons and uranium weapons).
- Increase the number of Mayors for Peace members to 5000 by 2010, making Mayors for Peace one of the largest local government associations in the world.
- Expand the Executive Committee to include cities from all continents, cities whose countries have a large number of members and cities associated with the plight of war.
- Establish contact centres within countries to support of the 2020 Vision Secretariat in Ypres – Manchester provides this role for the UK.
- Develop the 'Obamajority' campaign to refer to the global majority in favour of the elimination of nuclear weapons (particularly in Japan).

Mid-term activities –

- Use the Hiroshima 2010 Conference to determine new priorities given the result of the NPT Conference.

- Hiroshima and Nagasaki are considering bidding for the 2020 Olympics, to coincide with the culmination of the 2020 Vision.

Other key priorities –

- Building organisational capacity with better communication and more national and regional meetings.
- Building a firm fiscal foundation by encouraging more donations from members and accessing other grants and funds.
- Linking and co-operating with other war-scourged cities.

Following the Executive Conference, the action plan was agreed by all delegates at the Mayors for Peace General Conference.

The first plenary session of the Conference was titled 'Cities and Citizens Can Move Nations'. At this session a number of speakers talked about the work of cities and associations in promoting peace and a nuclear weapons free world. This included the NFLA Chair (pictured above), who gave an overview of the NFLA and its work in the UK and Ireland. This received a very warm reception from delegates.

August 9th, 2009 – Nagasaki



Nagasaki Peace Ceremony:

The NFLA Chair and Secretary were amongst the guests of honour at the 64th anniversary of the Nagasaki A-bombing.

Around 6000 people took part in what was another highly moving ceremony. At the ceremony the Mayor of Nagasaki spoke of taking up President Obama's 'Prague Pledge' of seeking a nuclear free world. The Mayor said:

"We ask the peoples of the world...to initiate efforts to declare support for Obama's Prague speech and take steps together towards a world without nuclear weapons."

The ceremony again had speeches from the Prime Minister of Japan and moving music from a Hibakuska choir. The President of the UN General Assembly, Miguel D'Escoto, endorsed the Mayors for Peace '2020 Vision'. It was also shown live on Japanese television.

Mayors for Peace Conference Day 2 –

In the afternoon, the conference resumed with a plenary session titled 'Future steps for the 2020 Vision Campaign'. The NFLA Secretary was one of the speakers in this session, talking about the rich history of Manchester as a 'city of peace' and the first city to declare itself 'nuclear free'. There was considerable interest in co-operating with Manchester and the NFLA for the 30th anniversary of its nuclear free declaration in 2010, with the Mayor of Nagasaki (Chair of NFLA Japan) very keen to be kept informed.

The Conference continued with drafting of the Nagasaki Appeal, which can be found on the Mayors for Peace website. This sums up the key aims of the 2020 Vision Campaign. An early flight on August 10th precluded involvement in the final plenary session on working with NGOs and the closing ceremony. The conference was very productive and it is clear that Mayors for Peace is an increasingly strong and imaginative, growing body. Manchester and the NFLA were treated with much respect throughout the visit.

Sean Morris, NFLA Secretary and Principal Policy Officer, Manchester City Council