Statement of *Religions for Peace* Japan
Toward the 11th Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference

Today, humanity stands at an unprecedented precipice, facing the threat of annihilation brought about by the nuclear weapons it has created. Currently, the words coming from the leaders of the world's nuclear-armed states are filled not with dialogue, but with threats. Messages from U.S. President Donald J. Trump suggesting the "destruction of civilization," remarks by Vice President J.D.Vance that "We have tools we haven't used yet," repeated nuclear threats by Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as France's policy of nuclear buildup and China's alarming nuclear expansion, are creating a climate of fear dominated by nuclear weapons in the international community. These developments have significantly lowered the threshold for nuclear use and, as UN Secretary-General António Guterres has warned, have raised the risk of nuclear war to its highest level in decades. Even in Japan, the only nation to have suffered atomic bombings, we cannot but express grave concern over the fact that voices condoning nuclear weapons have begun to emerge in political circles and within the government in recent years. However, for this reason, the fact that organizations advocating for the abolition of nuclear weapons—including the Japan Confederation of A- and H-Bomb Sufferers Organizations (Nihon Hidankyo)—have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on multiple occasions has had a powerful impact, demonstrating that the conscience calling for a world without nuclear weapons still runs deep in the global community.

At a time when the framework for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation is on the verge of fundamental collapse, we earnestly hope to overcome the "conflict and deadlock" marked by the failure to reach agreement at the last two NPT Review Conferences and finally achieve a meaningful agreement at this conference.

We are all interconnected, living within the web of life, and each individual possesses an irreplaceable dignity that must never be violated. The act of humans harming one another and taking each other's lives is incompatible with the "dignity of life" revered by our religious beliefs, and is utterly unacceptable. Our pledge for peace is grounded in our very faith, supporting critical political choices in the real world and to point the way forward. It is wisdom shared by many religions around the world and passed down through generations—namely, the simple teaching: "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you." Nuclear weapons—the ultimate form of violence capable of reducing civilization to ashes in an instant—stand in direct opposition to this conviction. Based on our unwavering commitment to peace, we earnestly call for the following four actions ahead of this NPT Review Conference:

1. *Reaffirmation and Sincere Adherence to Past NPT Agreements*: Sincerely adhere to the principles already agreed upon by the international community—such as "deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons," "compliance at all times with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law," and "a clear commitment by nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons"—and make these the unshakable foundation of the discussions.

2. *Concrete Implementation of Nuclear Disarmament Obligations under Article VI of the NPT*: Nuclear-weapon States must not postpone this obligation as a distant future goal to be achieved at some point. As a paramount imperative for the survival of humanity that allows no delay, they must present an effective roadmap for reducing stockpiles and diminishing the role of nuclear weapons.

3. *Placing complementarity with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the core and making abolition the "absolute goal" shared by all humanity*: Keeping firmly in mind that the very existence of nuclear weapons is the greatest risk, and treating the reduction of stockpiles and non-proliferation as fundamental obligations, we must establish "abolition" as the firm goal beyond these steps. Only abolition is the path to human survival. In this sense, a more effective linkage with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which comprehensively and legally prohibits nuclear weapons, is indispensable.

4. *Moving Beyond Self-Centered Nationalism and Rebuilding International Cooperation*: International cooperation based on the restoration of global trust is indispensable for the abolition of nuclear weapons. We must reject an attitude that prioritizes only our own national interests, foster mutual understanding and trust through dialogue, and truly revitalize multilateralism, which is in danger of becoming a hollow shell.

Religions for Peace Japan, together with our international network, will not succumb to despair even in the face of this increasingly turbulent situation. As representatives of the religious community in a nation that has suffered atomic bombings, we strongly warn the world of the unfathomable danger of nuclear deterrence—a "chain of terror" in which security premised on the destruction of others ultimately leads to one's own destruction. Until the day when the dignity of life is protected and a world without nuclear weapons is realized, we will continue to stand in solidarity with people from all walks of life around the world, continuing our unceasing prayers and actions.

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Religions for Peace Japan

Chairperson, Rev. Yoshiharu Tomatsu