Mr. President, distinguished delegates, and colleagues,

My name is Mitchie Takeuchi. I have the honor today to represent the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons, the 2017 Nobel Peace Laureate. I grew up in Hiroshima and my family survived the atomic bombing in 1945. I wish to share something of my own story and the importance of ICAN’s collective work around the world to usher in an age of the end of nuclear weapons.

In 1938, my grandfather, Ken Takeuchi, became the founding president of the Red Cross Hospital in Hiroshima. On August 6th 1945, he and most of his colleagues arrived a little before 8 a.m., which meant they were inside the hospital building before the first war-time use of an atomic bomb levelled my hometown. My grandfather’s request that they come early saved many doctor’s lives, so they could save more civilians that day. Although close to Ground Zero, the Red Cross Hospitalwithstood total destruction.

My grandfather remembers an enormous blast that caused a heavy door to fly off its hinges and knock him unconscious. When he came to, he was not able to move due to broken bones all over his body. His face also sustained horrible injuries. He had been carried to the outside of the main hospital building. What he saw defies description—unimaginable suffering, wailing and crying, dead bodies everywhere. It was complete chaos.

My 18-year-old mother was on the outskirts of the city. She survived the atomic bomb but was exposed to radiation as she searched for her father. She walked five miles through the hell-scape that Hiroshima City had become.

As we approach 75 years since the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the risk of nuclear weapon use is rising. The nuclear-armed states have embarked on a process to develop even more destructive nuclear weapons. They are tearing up arms control treaties.

Today, humanity still faces the threat of nuclear war. And as we have heard so much about this week at the UN, it also faces another existential threat—climate chaos. The two are interconnected, as one could exacerbate the risks of the other.
But an alternative future is possible. A future that drastically cuts carbon emissions and a future that eliminates nuclear weapons.

For the latter, this future lies with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. The TPNW offers an alternative to the irresponsibility and irrationality of world leaders with nuclear weapons. It outlaws nuclear weapons for everyone, for all time. This treaty is the future. It will enter into force. More countries are joining the treaty at ceremony in this very building, at this very moment.

You, member states of the General Assembly, have the power to stand up for the rule of law, peace, security, human rights, and environmental survival. On behalf of the atomic bomb survivors, both living and already deceased, we ask that you support the TPNW by signing and ratifying it. As young climate activist Greta Thunberg said here at the UN this week, “the eyes of all future generations are upon you.”