MESSAGE BY HIS EXCELLENCY CHRISTOPHER J. LOEAK
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS
TO THE HIROSHIMA YOUTH COMMITTEE OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO ABOLISH NUCLEAR WEAPONS

I convey greetings of Marshallese Yokwe!

I join other world leaders in welcoming the “Paper Cranes Project”, an initiative launched by the Hiroshima Youth Committee of the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. It is this kind of outreach project such as these that must given the special recognition and be given the necessary support needed towards bringing us closer to total global nuclear disarmament.

I applaud you and members of the ICAN for choosing a creative way to advance this goal, featuring the delivery of 1000 folded paper cranes – a global symbol of peace and disarmament – to all the world’s leaders. I am particularly touched by the message behind your campaign because as you may have been aware, the people of Nagasaki and Hiroshima are not alone in their atomic plight but rather the radiological legacy of U.S. nuclear weapons testing in the Marshall Islands remains to this day and will persist for many years to come.

More specifically, the period from June 30, 1946, to August 18, 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, all of which were considered atmospheric. The most powerful of those tests was the "Bravo" shot, a 15 megaton device detonated on March 1, 1954, at Bikini atoll. That test alone was equivalent to 1,000 Hiroshima bombs. While the Bravo test is well known, it should be acknowledged that 17 other tests in the Marshall Islands were in the megaton range and the total yield of the 67 tests was 108 megatons, the equivalent of more than 7,000 Hiroshima bombs.

For the sake of comparison, it may be noted that from 1945 to 1988, the U.S. conducted a total of 930 known nuclear tests with a combined yield estimated to be 174 megatons. Approximately 137 megatons of that total was detonated in the atmosphere. In other words, while the number of tests conducted in the Marshall Islands represents only about 14% of all U.S. tests, the yield of the tests in the Marshalls comprised nearly 80% of the atmospheric total detonated by the U.S. The world should never allow sufferings and devastations resulting from Nuclear testing to be ever visited upon the human race, ever.

I stand with you, through your project, to reinforce the views that have been expressed by
representatives of over 140 countries in support of concluding a nuclear-weapons
convention.

I recognize your work in engaging young people in the City of Hiroshima by giving them
a personal role in the promotion of the global nuclear disarmament and I hope it will
inspire additional efforts by young people everywhere who understand how important it
is to grow up in a world without such horrible weapons. The Marshallese people, like the
people of Hiroshima, know too well the horrific effects of nuclear weapons.

On behalf of the people and the Government of the Republic of the Marshall Islands, I
would like to take this opportunity to salute the Hiroshima Youth Committee and all their
partners in the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons for working with
such commitment and creativity in pursuit of our shared goal of a nuclear-weapon-free
world. The Republic of the Marshall Islands pledges its full support for this important
cause in further advancing this message as a signatory party to the Nuclear Proliferation
Treaty.

Christopher J. Loeak
President

Dated and signed:
November 22, 2012
Majuro, Republic of the Marshall Islands