

Opening Statement

by H.E. Mr. WASHIO Eiichiro, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the Track 1.5 Meeting for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament

9 March 2021

Good morning, good afternoon, and good evening, depending on where you are on the planet.

It is my great honor to organize today's meeting, especially with the presence of His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Gustavo Zlauvinen, president-designate of the next NPT Review Conference, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, UN High Representative for disarmament affairs, and many other prominent participants from across the globe.

Today, we are here to discuss ways to achieve a meaningful outcome at the next NPT Review Conference at such a vital juncture when the year 2020 marked the 75th year of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the 50th year since the entry into force of the NPT. I also take note that the TPNW entered into force this January.

I would like to give you some context of today's meeting. The Government of Japan established the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament in 2017, prompted by the deterioration of international security environment and widening gap among states on their approaches in realizing a world without nuclear weapons.

The Group intensively discussed so-called "hard questions" for building bridges among states and proposed concrete actions for 2020 and for 2025. In order to follow up on the outcomes of the Group, we held the first track 1.5 meeting in March last year.

Today's meeting is the continuation of such efforts. At the same time, as we look ahead to the next NPT Review Conference, it is essential that the international community address the divergence of views among states. To this end, we decided to hold today's meeting, building on the achievements of the Group and the previous track 1.5 meeting.

One of the most important messages from the Group was that we should restore civility in discourse. This is exactly why we took into consideration, above all, the diversity of views, in deciding the participants of this meeting.

Having such prominent participants with diverse opinions with us today, I look forward to discussing ways to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime. I'm strongly convinced that today's discussion will make substantial contribution to the chairmanship of Ambassador Zlauvinen, and accordingly to the Review Conference itself.

In conclusion, let me thank you all once again for joining us today, regardless of different time zones and your busy schedule. Japan is always happy to work with you together to make substantive contribution to our shared goal: realizing a world without nuclear weapons. Thank you for your attention.