

STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN
2023 High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament

President,
Distinguished colleagues,

I would like to express our sincere appreciation and reaffirm our support to the President of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), as well as Madam Secretary-General of the CD and her team for their valuable work.

President,

The international community is currently at a historic inflection point. The international security environment has become even more severe and there is a greater imperative than ever before for the CD to fulfill its role as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament with the participation of key stakeholders, including all nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-possessing countries.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a clear violation of international law and an outrage that shakes the very foundation of the international order. Any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force is totally unacceptable in any region of the globe. As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan absolutely cannot accept Russia's nuclear threats, let alone its use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances. The 77 years of history since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, during which time no nuclear weapons have been used, must not be ended.

As we serve as the Presidency of the G7 this year, Japan will show our strong determination to firmly reject any attempt to unilaterally change the status quo by force as well as the threat and the use of nuclear weapons. We will also reaffirm our resolve to uphold the international order based on the rule of law.

In the Indo-Pacific region, historical changes in power balances are occurring, and the security environment surrounding Japan is rapidly becoming even more severe. In the vicinity of Japan, military buildups, including of nuclear weapons and missiles, are rapidly advancing in an opaque manner, coupled with mounting pressures by attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force.

North Korea has intensified nuclear and missile activities, including its recent ballistic missile launches with an unprecedented frequency and in an unprecedented manner, in addition to its escalatory rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons. Such activities pose a serious challenge to the international community. Japan reiterates its strong commitment to the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of North Korea's all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges. Japan urges North Korea to abide by all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and return at an early date to full compliance with the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

President,

As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is strongly committed to leading international efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons. Convening this year's G7 Summit in Hiroshima is a demonstration of such conviction. Last year, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio participated in the Tenth NPT Review Conference for the first time as Japanese Prime Minister. At the Conference, he presented the "Hiroshima Action Plan" rooted in five actions which would take us from the "reality" of the harsh security environment to the "ideal" of a world without nuclear weapons. Japan will continue to advance realistic and practical efforts in line with "Hiroshima Action Plan". Based on such recognition, Japan organized the first meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons with the support from political leaders around the globe. It is also crucial to enhance transparency, which serve as the basis of all nuclear disarmament measures.

To avoid a possible reversal of the continued downward trend of the number of nuclear weapons, Japan reemphasizes the importance of the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons based on the Shannon Mandate. Approximately three decades have already passed since

the adoption of its negotiating mandate at the CD in 1995. We must gather collective wisdom to break this impasse without any further delay. Pending the entry into force of such a treaty, Japan calls upon all relevant states to declare or maintain moratoriums on fissile material production for the aforementioned purposes.

Furthermore, Japan urges all states, particularly the remaining States listed in its Annex 2, to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which has not entered into force for the past 25 years. Pending its entry into force, Japan urges all relevant states to declare or maintain existing moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions.

President,

With regard to the Tenth NPT Review Conference, the final outcome document could have been adopted, had it not been blocked by a member state. This reflects the shared recognition of States parties of the importance of maintaining and strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Japan calls on all NPT States parties to constructively engage in the First Session of the Preparatory Committee scheduled this summer.

Furthermore, in addition to disarmament measures, arms control measures that take into account international security environment are crucial. Responsible engagements with arms control frameworks such as the New START Treaty between the U.S. and Russia, are of benefit for the international community. Japan expresses strong hope for dialogues leading to the development of a broader framework of arms control, which involves not only the U.S. and Russia but other countries and covers a wider range of weapon systems.

President,

It is necessary to deepen discussions regarding the responsible military use of emerging technologies, including AI. Regarding lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), Japan calls for focusing on commonalities between countries' positions on the substance of the matter in order to accelerate consensus-building. Furthermore, Japan supports the

Open-Ended Working Group on "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours" to address increasing threats to the sustainable and stable use of outer space, and calls upon all countries' cooperation in this regard.

President,

As we are confronting the current severe security environment, we should reaffirm the importance of our common commitment to realize the peace and stability of the international community through disarmament and arms control measures. It is an urgent requirement to revitalize the CD, to break the prolonged stalemate over several decades, and build upon past discussions. Japan looks forward to further cooperating with the Member States to ensure that the CD fulfills its mandate as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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