

**Statement by Mr. Hirotaka ISHIHARA
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
Conference on Disarmament
4 March 2014, Geneva**

Mr. President,

Distinguished representatives,

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Vinicio Mati, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). I assure you the full support and cooperation of my delegation throughout your tenure. I also would like to express my gratitude to Acting Secretary General, Mr. Michael Møller, and his team for their continuous support to the work of the Conference. Japan centers disarmament as one of the pillars to its foreign policy and, for that reason, it is a great honor for me to have today's opportunity to address here.

Mr. President,

It is regrettable that this distinguished body, which produced the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), remains mired in an 18-year standstill. In order to meet expectations of the people worldwide for a safer world free of nuclear weapons, the CD must end its stalemate as quickly as possible and restart fulfilling its mandate.

Despite its deadlock, the importance itself of the Conference has not yet ended over the years. On top of bilateral nuclear reduction by the Russian Federation and the United States and unilateral measures taken by the United Kingdom and France, it is very important to push the multilateral disarmament negotiation forward by reflecting the voices of non-nuclear weapon States. This is why the CD is unique and can still play a crucial role. Japan will spare no effort to break through this impasse as one of the six Presidencies this year.

At the same time, I look forward to the launch of work by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) which will meet for the first time here in

Geneva at the end of this month. In parallel with its effort in the CD, Japan is ready to make constructive contributions in the GGE to produce tangible outcomes which could serve as a basis for future negotiations.

Overcoming the challenges currently surrounding us in disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, I would like to stress that it is especially important for all States to deepen engagement and involvement at the political level.

Mr. President,

Now, please allow me to touch upon Japan's basic view and policy. In January this year, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Fumio Kishida delivered a speech on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation policy in Nagasaki. In his address, Minister Kishida explained Japan's position that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts should be built upon the following two notions. First, we should have a clear understanding of humanitarian aspect of nuclear weapons as a point of departure for these efforts. Second, we should

objectively assess the reality of today's international community facing the increasingly diverse nuclear risks. From these two understandings, we conclude that steady but tireless efforts to build up practical and concrete measures are actually the shortest path to achieve our common goal.

Along with my Foreign Minister, I am also ready to work earnestly for progress in this area, and it is indeed for that reason that I am here at the CD. I particularly believe that raising awareness among the younger generation is important to further promote nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, Japan established "Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons" in June last year and twenty-three students have already been assigned to this title. In November, as an outcome from the program called the "Saitama City Student Presentation on International Issues", I received valuable recommendations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation from the Japanese high school students. To keep momentum, I hope such efforts by the younger generation will spread over the world.

Mr. President,

As I stated earlier in my remarks, political engagement is indispensable to the success of our efforts here. Hence, twelve cross-regional members of the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative or NPDI, including my own country, are committed to the group's activities at the minister level. The NPDI is an action-oriented group putting forward concrete proposals such as a draft standard reporting form on transparency of nuclear weapons.

On 11th and 12th April, the NPDI Ministers will meet in Hiroshima. Japan intends to have the Ministers directly see and sense the realities caused by the bombings during the course of the meeting. They will exchange views on various issues, including on nuclear disarmament in the post New START, transparency, and the humanitarian aspect of nuclear weapons, and aim to present useful proposals to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. President,

As the only country ever to have suffered nuclear bombings, Japan knows from its own experience the catastrophic humanitarian consequences from the use of nuclear weapons. Thus, Japan has actively contributed to the discussion on this issue.

I would like to reiterate that in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts, a clear understanding of humanitarian consequences caused by the use of nuclear weapons should underpin any kind of approach in nuclear disarmament. In other words, the humanitarian aspect of disarmament should function as a driving force for our efforts in a way inclusive and open to all States toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

In 2015, we will commemorate the 70th year since the atomic bombs were dropped in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I also invite all colleagues to visit the Permanent Exhibition on the Atomic Bombings located in the Palais des Nations, at the end of the ground floor of Building E. It is my sincere desire that the

steady implementation of realistic and practical disarmament measures, including through substantive work of the CD and the next NPT Review Conference, will achieve a step forward to “a world free of nuclear weapons”.

I thank you, Mr. President.
