

Statement by Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
to the United Nations General Assembly Informal Ministerial Plenary Meeting
to Commemorate the International Day for Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
(26 September 2014 in New York)

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen

First of all, it is my great honor to speak at this meeting to commemorate the “International Day for Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”. As Japan’s Foreign Minister hailing from Hiroshima, the city that suffered an atomic bombing, I have been proactively working towards achieving “a world free of nuclear weapons”. I would like to express my profound appreciation to President Kutesa of the United Nations General Assembly, and all the delegations and staff members who have worked hard in preparation for this meeting today.

Mr. Chairman,

Today there are still more than 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Proliferation concerns remain unresolved, including nuclear development by North Korea and Iran. Overall, there is a growing sense of alarm over illegal proliferation activity by terrorist groups.

I believe any efforts to address those issues should be based on the following:

First, we should have a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons. The discussion on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons should serve as a catalyst to “unite” the international community, and it is important to “spread” this awareness across generations and borders as well as to “deepen” our understanding on scientific aspects. In this connection, I hope that the Conference on Humanitarian Consequences of Nuclear Weapons, held in Vienna this December, will enjoy broad participation, including nuclear weapon states.

Second, we should squarely recognize the reality that we face

increasingly diverse nuclear risks. We should take effective and practical action to address these risks to advance efforts for nuclear disarmament.

It is necessary, therefore, that we should work towards three types of reductions, namely reductions in the number of nuclear weapons, the role they play, and the incentive to possess them. At the same time, we should work towards three kinds of preventions, namely, preventions of the emergence of new nuclear weapons states, the proliferation of nuclear-weapons-related materials and technologies, and nuclear terrorism.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan has worked actively to strengthen the NPT regime through the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), which was initiated by Japan and Australia in 2010. This April, Japan hosted the NPDI Ministerial Meeting in Hiroshima. In the meeting, representatives of participating countries witnessed firsthand the consequences of nuclear bombings, and issued the “Hiroshima Statement”, which includes realistic and practical approaches towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. As is mentioned in the Statement, I would like to call on again the world’s political leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Japan is determined to make further efforts to build blocks to make steady progress in nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Next year marks the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings, and will coincide with the upcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference. NPDI is determined to make a significant contribution to achieve results in this Conference.

Finally, I would like to conclude my statement by declaring that Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered an atomic bombing, conveys the tragedies of the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki across generations

and borders, and makes every effort towards achieving the goal of “a world free of nuclear weapons”

Thank you all very much for your attention.