

International Conference of the Critical Issues Forum
Foreign Affairs Minister Kishida Speech

I am delighted that, for the first time, the Critical Issues Forum (CIF) is meeting in Japan. Furthermore, I would like to express my respect to the James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies (CSN), the prefecture and city of Hiroshima, and the Hiroshima Jogakuin Junior and Senior High School for holding this Forum. Bearing in mind that this year marks 70 years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, it is particularly significant that young people from the United States, Russia and Japan gather today in Hiroshima to participate in this Forum, which focuses on disarmament and non-proliferation education with the aim to achieve a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons.

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in war, Japan attaches great importance to the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This Conference, which is held once every five years, will begin on April 27th. In this context, Japan co-founded the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), a cross-regional group of 12 non-nuclear-weapon States that submitted several practical and concrete recommendations in preparation of the NPT Review Conference. The NPDI recently submitted, as a basis for consensus, a proposal that summarizes these recommendations, and I instructed Japan's Ambassadors abroad to seek support for this proposal from all States that will participate in the NPT Review Conference. Furthermore, on April 1st, I met Ambassador Feroukhi, the President-designate of the upcoming NPT Review Conference, and further promoted the NPDI's proposal. Among all the issues mentioned in this proposal, Japan attaches particular importance to the following five issues: (1) transparency of nuclear force; (2) eventual multilateral nuclear disarmament weapons reduction negotiations and reduction of all types of nuclear weapons; (3) unity of the international community based on the discussions relating to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons; (4) invite political leaders to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki; (5) strong message regarding North Korea's nuclear issue. I want to ensure that a substantive outcome of the NPT Review Conference will bring us as close as possible to a world free of nuclear weapons. In order to achieve this, I must stress the importance of cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States.

In order to further advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in addition to measures and negotiations at the political level, emphasis has also been placed on

disarmament and non-proliferation education, given the importance of the energy of youth. With a clear understanding of this issue, young people are becoming the driving force that will bring us closer to a world free of nuclear weapons.

With respect to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education, immediately after becoming Minister, I started working on how to transmit to younger generations the reality of atomic bombings as atomic bomb survivors are growing old. Every year in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, several activities take place, in particular youth speeches and signature-collecting campaigns seeking the total elimination of nuclear weapons. In 2013, I set up the “Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons” program in order to support these activities. To date, we appointed a total of 60 Youth Communicators. I have had the opportunity to speak directly with these Youth Communicators several times, and I feel that their passion and powerful advocacy are indeed promising.

Further discussions among a large number of people, in particular young people representing the next generation, are extremely valuable in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. In this regard, I encourage all of you who are participating in today’s Forum to share this experience with your friends. Through these efforts, we might be able to spread the idea of a “world free of nuclear weapons”. I wish you a successful meeting.