

CTBT Group of Eminent Persons Meeting in Hiroshima
Statement by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
H.E. Mr. Kazuyuki NAKANE
(on behalf of H.E. Mr. Fumio KISHIDA, Minister for Foreign Affairs
of Japan)

(24 August 2015, Hiroshima, Japan)

Distinguished members of the Group of Eminent Persons,
Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

As this month marks the 70th year since the atomic bombings, I am very honored to welcome the members of the Group of Eminent Persons to Hiroshima and I would like to express my appreciation as Minister for Foreign Affairs from Hiroshima. I hold profound respect for the passionate work by the members of the Group towards the entry into force of the CTBT, and I thank the staff of the CTBTO Secretariat and the people of the City of Hiroshima for making this meeting possible.

For the following reasons, I feel it is quite timely that a meeting aimed at facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT is being held here in Hiroshima today.

First of all, this month is an especially important milestone for the people of Japan as the 70th year since the atomic bombings. On August 6th and 9th, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively, peace ceremonies commemorating the 70th year were held, and a record number of countries were represented at the two ceremonies. Now that the entire country is

being filled with an ever-stronger desire for peace and “a world free of nuclear weapons,” I am confident that this Conference held here at a city which suffered from an atomic bombing, will send out effective messages to the international community to mark a beginning of a new stage towards nuclear disarmament.

Secondly, in view of the outcomes of the NPT Review Conference held this spring in New York as well as the following situations of international affairs, it is now an opportune timing to build a new momentum towards the entry into force of the CTBT.

As Japan became a Coordinator of the entry-into-force of the CTBT from this year on, we made various proposals at the NPT Review Conference which were reflected in the draft final document.

To our regret, the draft final document was not adopted at the Review Conference, but in fact, I understand that most of the member States were prepared to agree on its substance, including the strong commitment towards an early entry into force of the CTBT. I believe we can regard this as a positive factor towards nuclear disarmament, even though we may not currently have a strongest tail wind due to instabilities in the international political climate such as the expansion of terrorist activities in the Middle East.

Precisely because the entry into force of the CTBT is dependent upon the political will of the Annex II countries, no one can predict when the favorable moment for them to ratify the CTBT may arise in the ever-changing international affairs, and it could come at any time. In the United States, which is said to hold the key to the CTBT’s entry into force, I understand that the continuous efforts towards the ratification are being

made under the leadership of President Obama. We must stay prepared for that moment to come, and continue our efforts keeping our hopes high.

Thirdly, may I point to the fact that, here in Hiroshima, we are standing at a place where an atomic bomb was dropped on humans for the first time in the world. Ever since then, as a country that knows the devastations of the use of atomic bombs more than anyone else, Japan has made a strong commitment that the tragedy shall never be repeated, and has been making its utmost efforts to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I myself have called upon the world leaders to visit the atomic-bombed areas, as one of the five items presented in my statement at the general debate of general speech at the NPT Review Conference. The realities of atomic bombings can really be learned only by actually visiting areas which have suffered from atomic bombings and feeling them with their own eyes and ears, and I believe that that will create the driving force to promote nuclear disarmament including the ban on nuclear tests. During this Conference, I understand that the participants will have opportunities to learn the realities of the atomic bombings. I hope that you will take home what you have felt, share them with your friends and colleagues, and strengthen the movement towards nuclear disarmament.

The path we must take to reach “a world free of nuclear weapons” is certainly not flat and smooth. But the entry into force of the CTBT is an important step towards the realization of that goal, and I would like to reiterate that this Conference can give the momentum. Through this Conference, Japan will redouble its efforts towards the CTBT’s entry into

force, while learning from the experience and the wisdom of the members of the Group of Eminent Persons.

Furthermore, as a tangible contribution towards the promotion of a wider movement towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan will submit a new draft resolution on the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly this fall.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my earnest hope that this Conference will serve to create new waves in the international movements towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and that the Hiroshima Declaration will mark a beginning of a new chapter.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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