

Message from Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
(delivered by Mr. Minoru Kiuchi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs)

Honorable Mr. William Perry, Former U.S. Secretary of Defense,
Lord Des Browne, Former U.K. Secretary of State for Defense,
Dr. Lassina Zerbo, Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission,
Mr. Hidehiko Yuzaki, Governor of Hiroshima Prefecture,
Mr. Kazumi Matsui, Mayor of Hiroshima City,

Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen;

It is my great honor to welcome you on behalf of the Government of Japan on the occasion of the commencement of the 25th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Hiroshima. I wish to commend the enthusiastic efforts of the organizers, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and Pacific of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and the people of the City of Hiroshima and Hiroshima Prefecture who have made this meeting possible, and express my deep gratitude. I also would like to welcome all of you, from all over the world, to Hiroshima.

Ladies and gentlemen,

70 years have passed since the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. 70 years ago, in August, here in my hometown of Hiroshima, a single bomb took more than one hundred and thirty thousand precious lives. Those who had initially survived later developed health problems and many of them subsequently lost their lives. As we gather here in Hiroshima to discuss nuclear disarmament, we must begin by once again reflecting on these historical facts, keeping the hopes of atomic bomb survivors close to our hearts.

The approximately 70,000 nuclear weapons that existed at the peak of the Cold War have been reduced significantly, yet over 16,000 still exist in the world today. We must never allow ourselves to become complacent and rest merely because no nuclear weapon has been used in the last 70 years. There are also developments that run counter to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. The international community must continue to make steady progress towards the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

I have made these thoughts clear not only here in Japan but also through media outlets throughout the world. Most recently, I contributed a message to CNN ahead of the day of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I attended the 2015 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference as a foreign minister from Hiroshima, with the hopes of atomic bomb survivors close to my heart and a determination to achieve progress towards a world free of nuclear weapons. In my statement at the General Debate, I called for cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States towards a world free of nuclear weapons, and emphasized to the international community the five points to which Japan attaches particular importance, including transparency of nuclear forces and multilateralization of nuclear weapons reduction negotiations.

These points, as well as the proposals by the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) led by Japan and Australia, were largely incorporated into the draft final document of this Review Conference, so it was to my great regret that the document was not adopted due to the issue of the Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The failure to establish a new Action Plan at the Review Conference has led to debates over the viability of the NPT. However, I would like to make one thing crystal clear. The NPT regime has played an extremely important role for peace and stability in the international community; a role that remains unchanged even today. We must also not forget that consensus was largely achieved through arduous negotiations, except on the issue of the Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Japan remains committed to the NPT regime and is determined to lead the debate in the international community towards a world free of nuclear weapons, while maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is important for nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to work together in steadily advancing practical and concrete measures in order to make real progress in nuclear disarmament.

For our part, in order to publicly declare our determination, Japan will submit to the United Nations General Assembly Meeting this autumn a new draft resolution on the total elimination of nuclear weapons that is appropriate to the 70th year since the atomic bombings and could serve as guidelines for the international community for the next five years, on the basis of the Review Conference.

Japan also places importance on the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). To this end, I myself served as the chairman of the Seventh CTBT Ministerial Meeting in September last year. This September, Japan, together with Kazakhstan, will co-chair the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. Japan and Kazakhstan together will take the lead for the next two years in working towards the early entry into force of the CTBT as the joint

coordinating states for facilitating its entry into force. Since the next year marks the 20th anniversary of the opening of the CTBT for signature, I shall express through the Conference our strong political determination to accelerate the universal adoption of the CTBT and the signing and ratification of those countries whose signature and ratification is required for its entry into force.

Ladies and gentlemen,

With regard to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, three international conferences have been held where this issue has been actively debated from various perspectives, including their short-, medium-, and long-term impact on health, and more broadly on the economy and society in general, the risk factors of the use of nuclear weapons, and so on. Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in warfare, understands more deeply than any other country the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, and has strongly called for its greater awareness to underpin all approaches and efforts towards nuclear disarmament. This has become the common understanding of the international community, and was referred to in the draft final document of the 2015 NPT Review Conference as well.

From the perspective of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, the reality of atomic bombings is far from being sufficiently understood worldwide. In order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, it is extremely important for political leaders, youths, and others worldwide to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and see for themselves the reality of atomic bombings. Through this, I am convinced that we will be able to share our aspirations for a world free of nuclear weapons.

I am convinced that it is the mission and responsibility of Japan to share the reality of atomic bombings across borders and generations. It is particularly important to pass it

on to younger generations. I have great hopes in this respect for the efforts of the Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons, who have been entrusted with this important mission.

In addition, we will continue our efforts in areas such as transparency of nuclear forces, multilateralization of nuclear weapons reduction negotiations, and an early start of the negotiations for the Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

Ladies and gentlemen,

Turning our eyes to regional issues, North Korea's development of nuclear weapon and missile programs poses a serious threat to the security of the region and the international community, and also poses a serious challenge to the NPT regime. Japan will continue to call upon North Korea to refrain from provocative acts and to sincerely and completely implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions and the joint statements of the Six-Party Talks. We must send a robust message to North Korea. Japan welcomes the recent achievement of the final agreement between the EU3+3 and Iran on the Iranian nuclear issue as a contribution to the reinforcement of the international nonproliferation regime and a step towards stability in the Middle East region. We appreciate the efforts of the countries concerned and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and strongly hope that the agreement will be faithfully implemented.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We welcome today Ambassador Taous Feroukhi, the chairman of the 2015 NPT Review Conference, Executive Secretary Zerbo of the CTBTO, and other distinguished

leaders in the field of this United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues. I understand that there will be discussions of the results of the Review Conference, the CTBT, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapon-free zones, nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation in Asia, cooperation with civil society, and other issues. These are all important issues that will determine the direction of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation over the next five years. I look forward to the active exchange of views from a wide range of perspectives from countries around the world.

Also, we will provide an opportunity to visit the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum and to listen to the experiences of victims of the atomic bombing during this conference. I hope that you will deepen your understanding of the reality of atomic bombings. As for the people of Hiroshima, I would greatly appreciate it if you could take part in the sessions of the conference and use this opportunity to once again reflect on the promotion of nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation.

In addition to this United Nations Conference on Disarmament, the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting will be held here in Hiroshima next April. We will take such opportunities to make the voices of Hiroshima and Nagasaki heard around the world.

I would like to conclude my remarks by sincerely wishing for the success of the Conference.

Thank you for your kind attention.