

(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY TOSHIO SANO
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 71ST SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- THEMATIC DEBATE: NUCLEAR WEAPONS -
17 OCTOBER 2016, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

Worsening global and regional security environment in the past several years has changed the nuclear disarmament landscape. The 2015 NPT Review Conference failed to show the concrete guideline of nuclear disarmament toward the 2020, and the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has remained in a deadlock this year too. Furthermore, it was regrettable that the Open-Ended Working Group on taking multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in Geneva held this year was unable to reach a consensus outcome, and this brought further divisiveness not only between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States but also among non-nuclear-weapon States. We should avoid further fragmentation of the disarmament community, and instead unite our efforts for taking forward disarmament and non-proliferation. As is elucidated in the course of the OEWG process, Japan is of the view that we should pursue a world free of nuclear weapons according to the Progressive Approach, the essential elements of which are illustrated in the relevant working paper submitted to the OEWG.

The 2020 NPT Review Cycle will commence next year. We should redouble our efforts to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime as it has been a linchpin for international peace and security over the past half century. The steady implementation

of the Action Plan of 2010 and other measures agreed to in the past Review Conferences in 1995 and 2000 serves as the foundation for our joint endeavor.

In this regard, Japan has submitted to this Committee a draft resolution entitled “United Action with Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.” This resolution provides practical and concrete measures acceptable for most Member States, and this aims at providing the common denominator or a standard on a wide-range of issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We strongly hope that all Member States extend their support to this resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

At this juncture, I would like to underscore the following points from our national perspectives.

First, as I stated just before, the NPT is an overarching architecture which ensures international security by preventing proliferation of nuclear weapons and by promoting nuclear disarmament. Therefore, we continue to underline the importance of compliance with and universality of the treaty. We should be well prepared in advance for the next Review cycle starting from 2017. Japan, together with other NPDI members, will contribute to a successful outcome of 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Second, Japan encourages five nuclear-weapon States to take a lead in nuclear disarmament despite difficult global and regional environment. We call upon Russia and the US, both of which maintain the largest nuclear arsenals, to resume negotiations as early as possible. Furthermore, Japan urges the all nuclear-weapon States to take as many concrete disarmament measures as possible, even small steps that they can accomplish on a voluntary basis. Among other things, the continuation of reporting mechanism for transparency should be underscored. We look forward to seeing the

reports by the all nuclear-weapon States submitted to the appropriate international fora including the NPT PrepCom next spring, which will provide Member States an opportunity to discuss their reports.

Third, Japan is convinced that practical and concrete nuclear disarmament measures through the constructive cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States is the only effective way to make advances in nuclear disarmament. This is actually a short-cut, not a “detour” as some may claim. Japan expects that discussions in this First Committee not only between nuclear-weapon States but also among non-nuclear-weapon States will lead to the fruitful outcome in our joint efforts toward a world free of nuclear weapons. Among twenty-five measures proposed by the countries supporting the “progressive approach” during the OEWG this year, we regard the CTBT and an FMCT as crucial building blocks necessary to (first) reach the “minimization point” and then realize a world free of nuclear weapons. As for the CTBT, Japan welcomes the ratification by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland. At the same time, Japan once again urges all countries, particularly, the remaining eight Annex II States to overcome internal difficulties and manage to take prompt action for ratification of the Treaty. Japan, on its part, will redouble its efforts through bilateral and multilateral channels to increase number of ratifying countries. In this regard, we welcome the outcome of the Eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York and the 20th Anniversary Ministerial Meeting in Vienna and the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2310.

The Conference on Disarmament has long been considered as the venue to negotiate an FMCT in that all stakeholders are engaged. However, it is extremely regrettable that there appear few emerging prospects in the CD in the near future. While continuing our utmost efforts to start negotiations within the CD, we believe that we should seriously start considering other ways that may facilitate the commencement of

negotiations. In the meantime, we strongly urge all nuclear-weapon States and states possessing nuclear warheads to declare or continue to maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

Mr. Chairman,

Fourth, the DPRK recently conducted its fifth nuclear test and claimed to have successfully detonated a nuclear warhead. In addition, the DPRK has launched this year alone more than 20 ballistic missiles, including SLBMs. The series of launches of missiles and the claim of successful detonation of a nuclear warhead have brought the threat of DPRK a dimension altogether different from what has transpired until now. Japan condemns the DPRK in the strongest terms and urges it to immediately comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. At the same time, all UN Member States bear an obligation to implement a series of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 and also should demonstrate a firm attitude in addressing this threat of a new dimension. Japan will continue to coordinate closely with relevant countries towards the adoption of a new Security Council resolution that includes additional sanction measures.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly, Japan believes that both the precise recognition of both catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and objective assessment of severe security environment are important in promoting nuclear disarmament. We believe that the humanitarian issue can play a bridging role between different

approaches and efforts of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and unite the entire international disarmament community. At the same time, against the backdrop of an increasingly severe security environment including that in Northeast Asia, we need to address the security considerations as we promote efforts toward nuclear disarmament. By way of conclusion, let me reiterate that both national security and humanitarian aspects must be taken into consideration in our joint endeavor of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you.