

2 March 2017

Open-ended informal consultative meeting on “Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices”

Statement by H.E. Mr. Koro Bessho

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Madam Chair,

Before I begin, I would like to congratulate you on behalf of the Government of Japan on your assumption of the chairpersonship of the informal consultative meeting on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Let me assure you of my delegation's full support for your efforts.

Madam Chair,

Japan highly values the openness and inclusiveness of this informal consultative meeting. Both will be key in creating the necessary dynamism and momentum for an FMCT.

This open-ended meeting provides Member States and civil society with an excellent opportunity to consider the report of the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE), which undertook the most in-depth discussion to date on aspects of a future treaty.

An interactive discussion and exchange of views on the report will deepen Member States' awareness of the importance of a treaty and inspire cooperation on the commencement of negotiations.

In order to promote nuclear disarmament, practical and concrete measures are needed, with cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. These measures should be based on a clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, and on an objective assessment of the

security realities we face.

An FMCT is one of the instruments that address both of these aspects. Promoting the treaty process is also the most workable option to support the international community's march towards nuclear disarmament.

It is also beyond dispute that an effective FMCT would strengthen international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes, broaden and reinforce efforts to ensure the security of nuclear materials, and bolster international security. It is therefore imperative that negotiations on an FMCT commence without further delay as the logical next step towards nuclear disarmament.

Madam Chair,

Everyone agrees that the total elimination of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved overnight. It is a cumulative process. To ensure continued progress towards our common goal, qualitative capping of nuclear weapons development through a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing must be complemented by quantitative capping through a ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

To meet the former requirement, it is essential that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) enter into force on the earliest possible date. The latter requires that negotiations begin on an FMCT. With both the CTBT and an FMCT in place, the world will finally have the necessary tools to halt the manufacture of nuclear weapons and the nuclear arms race, creating an environment conducive to the subsequent elimination of nuclear weapons.

Japan highly appreciates the work of the previous GGE which identified areas, including definitions, verifications, scope, as well as legal and institutional matters, which merit additional work by experts. Japan also welcomes the General Assembly resolution proposed by Canada, Germany and the Netherlands, which established the high-level FMCT expert preparatory group by an overwhelming majority of states last December. This demonstrates broad international recognition of the importance of an

FMCT for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Madam Chair,

Japan attaches great importance to the early commencement of negotiations on an FMCT. We urge that all Member States bear in mind the recommendations of the GGE report, which clearly request the commencement of negotiations without further delay.

Thank you.