

Remarks by

H.E. Mr. Fumio KISHIDA, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

At the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference

Mr. Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are all gathered here in Vienna with a firm determination in mind to achieve a successful NPT Review Conference in 2020. The year 2020 marks the 50th year of entry into force of the NPT and 75th year since the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

As a Foreign Minister from Hiroshima, a city devastated by atomic bombing, I have worked tirelessly towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons on such occasions as the 2015 NPT Review Conference since I assumed a post of Foreign Minister in 2012. In doing so, I have always been reminded that Japan has the mission as the only country suffering from atomic bombings with the aspiration of the Hibakushas.

Today, I would like to emphasize that the success of the 2020 Review Conference is more important than ever given the deepening gap between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States, and explain Japan's policy and actions to that end.

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, I would like to pay tribute to the efforts by the Hibakushas and the communities affected by atomic bombings, who have been calling for a world free of nuclear weapons. I would also like to pay respect to the efforts by the civil societies all over the world to promote discussions on humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. The recognition of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons underpins all approaches towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

Meanwhile, North Korea has conducted two nuclear tests and launched more than 30 ballistic missiles since last year. Its nuclear and missile development has now reached a new level and is posing a real threat to the region and beyond in the international community. This is a challenge to the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime centered on the NPT. Its acts of provocation should be strongly condemned. Efforts towards a world free of nuclear weapons should be carried out in a realistic manner, while taking into account the security environment that is becoming increasingly severe, including that of North Korea.

With the clear recognition of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and the objective assessment of the severe international security environment, I am convinced that only the promotion of cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States will lead to a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

At this moment, the schism on approaches towards a world free of nuclear weapons has become salient among nuclear-weapon States, between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, and even among non-nuclear-weapon States. In light of such situation, I would like to put forward the following three points as a way to bridge nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States and to rebuild confidence and trust among them.

The first is to further build confidence through enhancing transparency. This includes reliable detection of nuclear testing by enhancing the International Monitoring System (IMS) under the CTBT. This also includes the reporting of nuclear forces by nuclear-weapon States, and that of possessed fissile materials that could be used for nuclear weapons. All of these will contribute to building further confidence between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. Based on this conviction, Japan will host side-events on the CTBT and transparency in the course of the Preparatory Committee. I look forward to welcoming many of you in these events.

The second is to improve security environment in order to reduce the incentive to possess nuclear weapons. On the North Korean issues, Japan will lead the diplomatic efforts to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula as well.

The third is to raise awareness of the reality of the use of nuclear weapons and the risk of its proliferation. I am confident that if many people in the world, including political leaders and youth from both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, learn the reality of atomic bombings and accurately understand the diversifying nuclear risks, that will build a common foundation for making a nuclear free world.

Mr. Chairman,

As we rebuild confidence and trust between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States and strive to build an internationally reliable verification system, we will move forward towards the early entry into force of the CTBT and early commencement of negotiation of an FMCT. Those instruments will thereby limit both qualitative and quantitative improvement of nuclear forces, and we will steadily decrease the number of nuclear weapons while striving to build an internationally reliable verification system.

In this way, when we reach a so-called “minimisation point” at which the number of nuclear weapons is decreased to a very low level, we will introduce a legal framework aimed at achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons, and then, we will reach this goal. This is the pathway towards a world free of nuclear weapons which Japan genuinely believes in. I am convinced that this approach provides the realistic and practical shortcut towards a world free of nuclear weapons, instead of pressing a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons at this point in a manner that deepens the gap between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States. We should be well-advised about the time sequences of addressing the legal framework eliminating nuclear weapons.

The NPT is our common ground which forms a basis for this approach as well as an important means by which we can promote nuclear disarmament. Therefore, Japan will continue to call for the universalization of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

In the 2015 NPT review conference, I put forth “five principles” towards a world free of nuclear weapons. On that occasion, the NPDI contributed to the deliberations. I am now pleased to announce that the NPDI will continue to play a leading role in the 2020 review process. The NPDI has already submitted six working papers on issues, including transparency and nuclear and missile issues of North Korea to this preparatory committee, as its first contributions.

Moreover, Japan will continue to strive so that countries holding different approaches will engage in discussions on practical nuclear disarmament measures in a constructive manner. As a first step, Japan will take following three actions;

- Japan will invite men and women from both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States knowledgeable of nuclear disarmament to Japan and establish an eminent persons group this year. We will obtain proposals from the group that lead to a substantial progress of nuclear disarmament, to be submitted to the next Preparatory Committee.
- Japan will host the Regional Conference for States in South East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East Region (SEAPFE) this year with a view to contributing to the entry into force of the CTBT
- Japan will work for building an international network between Youth Communicators and CTBT Youth Group in order to spread the awareness of humanitarian consequences of atomic bombings across national borders and generations. Also, Japan will continue to work for inviting 1000 guests to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to realize a world free of nuclear weapons, it is imperative to advance the nuclear non-proliferation efforts along with nuclear disarmament. Japan strongly urges North Korea to immediately and fully implement the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions as well as the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, and return, at an early date, to the NPT and to the IAEA safeguards. Concerted efforts by the international community are essential to advance non-proliferation. Japan will continue to promote regional and international efforts to strengthen non-proliferation and export control through capacity building in Asia and other regions.

It is also extremely important that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) between Iran and EU 3+3 be steadily implemented. In order to support its implementation, Japan has provided assistance through the IAEA that is worth 550,000 euros for cooperation in the field of nuclear safety and 1.5 million euros for cooperation in the field of the IAEA safeguards implementation.

Japan will continue to contribute to enhancing capacity building for global nuclear security. Japan has made new contribution of 640,000 Euros to the IAEA, which plays a central role in strengthening nuclear security. Also, Japan will host the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) Plenary Meeting in Tokyo next month, which will be the most prominent level gathering on nuclear security this year, inviting 86 countries and 5 international organizations.

Mr. Chairman,

To maintain and reinforce the NPT regime, it is indispensable to promote international cooperation in pursuing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy: the NPT's third pillar. Japan has contributed more than 13 million dollars to the IAEA's Peaceful Uses Initiative since the 2015 Review Conference. Japan's contribution has helped support 48 countries in 31 projects, to name a few, addressing dengue fever in Asia, improving food security in Africa and enhancing capacity in radiation therapy in Latin America and the Caribbean countries. As a leading country in the applications of nuclear science and technology, Japan is determined to continue its contribution.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT is the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The regime centered on the NPT accommodates all efforts and approaches of Member States and civil society, unite us all and bring about peace and security as well as total elimination of nuclear weapons in the world. I would like to conclude my remarks by reiterating Japan's determination to do its best for the success of the 2020 NPT Review Conference in cooperation with all countries which share the aspiration for a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.