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STATEMENT BY KAZUHIRO NAKAI
DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO
THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 74th SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION -
OCTOBER 23, 2019, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

Japan is striving for arms control, disarmament, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in order to achieve global and regional peace and stability. The use of WMD must not be permitted under any circumstances and thus we reiterate the importance of reinforcing the Chemical and Biological Weapons Conventions and other relevant regimes.

The international community has made significant progress in preventing the re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). However, the use of chemical weapons has become a serious and urgent issue in recent years. The international community must be united in condemning the use of these weapons and perpetrators should be identified and held accountable.

In this regard, Japan welcomes the establishment of the Identification and Investigation Team (IIT) and the commencement of its work in Syria. We hope that based on the Fact Finding Mission (FFM)'s investigation, the IIT will be able to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the country. To ensure that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) is able to continue to conduct its work in an impartial and scientifically sound manner, Japan has contributed to the project to upgrade the OPCW laboratory and will continue to support the organization's activities.

Mr. Chairman,

The increased threat posed by non-State actors, including by terrorists, is of particular concern and we must prevent chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into their hands. In order to address this challenge, we should work to strengthen the OPCW to maximize its efficiency and encourage the States parties to implement their national measures. We welcome the many proposals submitted by

States Parties on this matter and will participate in discussions in an active, cooperative, and constructive manner.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan takes its obligations under the CWC seriously, as we have invested a significant amount of human and financial resources in fulfilling one of our obligations, which is to destroy abandoned chemical weapons (ACW) in China. Although the ACW project entails various challenges and uncertainties, we have been making consistent progress. Approximately 57,000 of the 75,000 ACW items recovered have been destroyed thanks to valuable on-site joint efforts with China. I would like to underline that, without such constructive bilateral cooperation and coordination, this unprecedented, difficult project could not be carried out. Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue all possible efforts to advance this project.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the CWC, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has played a vital role in maintaining international peace and security. Japan is fully committed to reinforcing the BWC regime¹. Japan believes that during the intersessional programme, States Parties should discuss in a cooperative and constructive manner the possible measures to strengthen the BWC, with a view to adopting these measures at the 9th Review Conference in 2021. Potential means to strengthen the BWC include the mechanism and procedure of the provision of support to states endangered by treaty violation and the science and technology review process.

In order to demonstrate our commitment to international cooperation and to reinforce the BWC regime, Japan has undertaken a number of initiatives in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and the BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU). We organized capacity-building workshops in Asia to enhance preparedness for and response to the use of biological weapons, and we held thematic seminars in Geneva to promote dialogue on this topic. We will continue to organize more international cooperation projects of this kind and plan to hold a training workshop to enhance the Convention's national implementation in Asia. We hope that many States Parties will participate in and take advantage of our initiatives.

Mr. Chairman,

¹ UN Disarmament Agenda Action 10 "Readiness to investigate alleged use of biological weapons" for which Japan is a Supporter.

Japan also underlines the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1540, which provides the international community with a basis to tackle the threat of WMD proliferation posed by non-state actors. Japan contributed approximately 1 million dollars to the UNODA to promote its implementation, and part of the contribution was utilized for the launch of the Online Training Course on UNSCR 1540. Japan will continue to support the implementation of the Resolution, beyond the next comprehensive review to be adopted in 2021.

To conclude, Japan understands the importance of strengthening the relevant international treaties and regimes in order to realize our goal of a world free of Weapons of Mass Destruction such as chemical and biological weapons. In this regard, we emphasize the need for effort and cooperation between stakeholders to strive towards a common understanding and take effective action.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.