

Statement by JAPAN
At the First Committee of the 76th Session of the General Assembly
— Thematic Debate: Nuclear Weapons —
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It has already been 76 years since the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Ever since that day, it has been Japan's mission to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

We still find ourselves struggling to achieve that goal today. We must make sure that the horrors of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings are never repeated. That can only be guaranteed by the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

With the NPT Review Conference less than 2 months away, it is imperative that the international community regains its momentum and determination for the total elimination of nuclear weapons. It should refocus on upholding and strengthening the NPT as the cornerstone of such global efforts.

First and foremost, we cannot afford to repeat the experience of the last Review Conference in 2015 and we will make our utmost efforts to make sure this does not happen.

Under the leadership of Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio, hailing from Hiroshima, Japan has reaffirmed its determination and will continue to make its utmost efforts to bridge differences among nations on how to advance nuclear disarmament, and pursue a common ground upon which all states can work together to achieve a meaningful outcome at the upcoming NPT Review Conference.

To this end, Japan has submitted the draft resolution entitled “Joint courses of action and future oriented dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons” to this committee. I ask all Member States to lend their support to this draft resolution. Compared to last year, this year's draft resolution has been largely improved and should provide a sound common basis to work with at the upcoming Review Conference.

In particular, it recognizes the reaffirmation of the importance of implementing past commitments of the NPT Review Conferences, and support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

With regard to concrete measures, Japan encourages all states, especially nuclear armed states to implement the following six courses of action.

The first is transparency. Efforts to increase transparency and accountability, through the enhancement of the reporting mechanism, the submission of NPT national implementation reports and discussion of these reports, helps build confidence and trust, and establishes common ground that can facilitate nuclear disarmament. States parties, in particular, nuclear-weapon states, should provide frequent and detailed reporting on their disarmament efforts, and use all available opportunities to further explain and share information regarding topics covered in their respective reports.

In this connection, Japan welcomes the five-year extension by the United States of America and the Russian Federation of the New START Treaty. We do stress the importance of concrete actions for more transparency between and among nuclear-weapon States, and strongly hope that this progress will lead to the development of a broader framework of arms control, which involves other countries beyond the U.S. and Russia and covers a wider range of weapon systems.

Second is nuclear risk reduction. Concrete actions should be taken to reduce the risks of nuclear weapon use inter alia by miscalculation or by misunderstanding. Japan encourages all nuclear-weapon states and states possessing nuclear weapons to take actions to reduce the risks of nuclear weapon use and to make further efforts to this end including transparency and dialogue, hotlines, or information and data exchanges.

Third and fourth, we reaffirm the importance of all efforts towards FMCT negotiations, including substantive discussions at the CD, and the entry into force of the CTBT. Japan encourages all nuclear-weapon states and states possessing nuclear weapons to declare or maintain a voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile materials for the use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices until an FMCT takes effect. Signing and ratifying the CTBT, continued support for the Preparatory Commission of the CTBTO are also examples of actions that can be jointly undertaken by all Member States. Japan encourages all states to declare or maintain existing moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or any other nuclear explosions.

Fourth is nuclear disarmament verification. Japan underscores the indispensable role of effective and credible nuclear disarmament verification, and has made substantive contributions to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Fifth is disarmament and non-proliferation education. Japan encourages all Member States to facilitate efforts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education, efforts with which future generations can actively engage, including through dialogue platforms, mentoring,

internships, fellowships, scholarships, model events and youth group activities, as well as to raise awareness of the realities of the use of nuclear weapons, including through, among others, visits by leaders, youth and others to and interactions with communities and people, including the hibakusha who pass on their experiences to the future generations.

In addition to these actions, Japan cannot but highlight its deep concern about North Korea's continued development of nuclear and missile capabilities, including developments highlighted by the IAEA Director General's Report in August and the recent missile launches. Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving CVID of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles of all ranges as well as related programmes and facilities in accordance with relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. Japan calls on North Korea to take concrete steps. We also call on all Member States to fully implement relevant UNSCRs.

There are two final points that we would like to make. The first is that while tensions can flare, as we go into the NPT Review Conference, we need civility. We need to have civil discussions as we engage in negotiations. Then Foreign Minister Kishida established the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament in 2017 which released an outcome document, called Chair's Report in 2019, which pointed out the importance of restoring civility in discourse as one of the principles for positive engagement to bridge disarmament divide. We need this now and at the upcoming Review Conference more than ever. At the same time, we cannot but stress the importance of leaders and the youth visiting Hiroshima and Nagasaki. While our discourse should be civil, it should not solely be pragmatic or defending our entrenched national positions. Whatever positions we may take, we believe that our common goal of the total eliminations of nuclear weapons must be grounded in humanity and a conviction to do so, this is no better ensured than going to, seeing and feeling Ground Zero and learning the utter devastation cast upon the people and cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With the next NPT Review Conference just around the corner, I end my remarks by calling on all states to join forces in our endeavor by demonstrating both civility and also a humane conviction towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons in the upcoming discourse to enable all of us to bring about substantive advancement of nuclear disarmament.

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