

The 3rd Track 1.5 Meeting  
for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament  
**Opening Remarks**  
by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio  
December 9, 2021

Excellencies,  
Ambassador Zlauvinen, President-designate of the 10th NPT Review Conference,  
Ms. Nakamitsu, Under Secretary General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations,  
Distinguished guests,

I would like to extend my heartfelt welcome to everyone joining us today from all over the world.

We are hosting today's meeting with the aim of deepening discussions in the run-up to the NPT Review Conference scheduled next January. I attach importance to the NPT in which both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States participate, as the cornerstone of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

During my tenure as Foreign Minister, I attended the 2015 NPT Review Conference as an incumbent Foreign Minister for the first time in 10 years. Towards achieving consensus at the Conference, I engaged in intensive discussions time and again among member states of the NPDI, or the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative, including at the NPDI Ministerial Meeting held in Hiroshima in 2014. Japan, together with other member states of the NPDI, also submitted a draft proposal for a consensus outcome document before the Conference in 2015. Nevertheless, the Conference in 2015 ultimately concluded without a consensus outcome document.

I was back in my hometown of Hiroshima when this unfortunate news reached me, and I still vividly remember how I had to break this news to the people of Hiroshima, and how I stated that "This is utterly regretful" in that we could not achieve consensus at the NPT Review Conference in the year marking the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the atomic bombings on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki.

Since then, six years have passed.

The frustration concerning the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament under the NPT was a contributing factor to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). The TPNW is an important treaty that could be regarded as a final passage to a world without nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, a single nuclear-weapon State has not joined the Treaty, even though the participation of nuclear-weapon States is indispensable to realize a world without nuclear weapons. As it stands today, States are currently divided with regard to their respective positions on the TPNW.

In the meantime, the security environment surrounding Japan is rapidly becoming ever more severe. The build-up of nuclear forces in an opaque manner and the technological advancement of delivery systems of nuclear weapons are only a few examples of such activities. The nuclear and missile programs of North Korea threaten the peace and stability not only of Japan but also that of the international community. The schism among States with divergent views is ever widening, and we are losing our common ground to cooperate and advance nuclear disarmament.

This is the severe reality we are facing today.

Against such a backdrop, the NPT Review Conference will be held in January next year. I hear that many have expressed their concern that the Review Conference will fail once again and that no consensus outcome document will be adopted.

This is not a time, however, for us to sit idly by in the face of this harsh reality. To pave the way forward, we must take a decisive step towards making a breakthrough at the upcoming NPT Review Conference. During my tenure as Foreign Minister, I strongly recognized that nothing could proceed unless both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States engaged in disarmament, and nuclear-weapon States took action. This is why Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, should lead countries with divergent views to overcome their differences and

cooperate with each other by involving nuclear-weapon States, while gaining the confidence of the United States as our only ally. To this end, Japan will spare no effort towards the adoption of a final document that would constitute a substantive step forward towards a world without nuclear weapons at the next NPT Review Conference.

With a view to playing a proactive role in building consensus, Japan has proposed elements to be included in the final document by submitting to the UN General Assembly a resolution on nuclear disarmament. I am pleased to say that this resolution was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 158 States three days ago. Japan has also submitted working papers together with our NPDI colleagues and friends from the Stockholm Initiative.

To enhance momentum for achieving consensus at the NPT Review Conference, I will dispatch Mr. TERADA Minoru, whom I recently designated as Special Advisor to the Prime Minister for Disarmament and Non-proliferation affairs, to countries concerned. I myself will continue to actively call on world leaders to realize the adoption of a consensus outcome document.

Distinguished guests,

At the upcoming NPT Review Conference, we need to solidify the cornerstone of the international regime, the NPT, and rebuild confidence between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States. We must build upon such efforts, and move closer to the final passage to a world without nuclear weapons.

To reach this final passage, we have many tasks to carry out:

- continue effective nuclear disarmament measures such as the early entry into force of the CTBT and the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT;
- limit the qualitative and quantitative build-up of nuclear weapons;
- make every effort to build a reliable international verification mechanism;
- and steadily decrease the number of nuclear weapons.

It is these efforts that will lead us to a world without nuclear weapons. This is the roadmap which Japan believes would take us to this lofty goal.

Distinguished guests,

Unfortunately, the reality is that even discussions on reducing the number of nuclear weapons have not shown progress, let alone talks concerning their abolition. Rather, there is a risk that the number of these weapons could increase. Against such a severe backdrop, what could be the key to building an unshakable foundation that enables the reduction of nuclear weapons? I believe that before anything else the key to this lies in the transparency concerning nuclear forces.

Lack of transparency hinders us from verifying whether nuclear disarmament is truly advancing, or verifying whether nuclear disarmament measures are in fact regressing. No other measure than increasing transparency of nuclear forces can be the first step for the nuclear-weapon States to actually reduce their nuclear weapons. From this perspective, Japan welcomes the fact that the United States has unilaterally resumed releasing its nuclear weapons stockpile data.

Japan will call on all nuclear-weapon States to further disclose information on their nuclear forces, including nuclear warheads and delivery systems. Moreover, I understand that various discussions are underway regarding efforts towards the NPT Review Conference within the framework of the P5 process. We hope to achieve a meaningful outcome for all pillars in a balanced manner, including in the area of nuclear disarmament.

Distinguished guests,

With the aim of producing a successful outcome at the NPT Review Conference, I would like all experts at today's meeting to put forth ideas irrespective of their national positions and to conduct candid discussions on concrete pathways for the realization of a world without nuclear weapons.

Let us take a big step forward towards our shared exit of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.