

(Provisional Translation)

Opening Remarks by Foreign Minister Iwaya
at the First FMCT Friends Ministerial Meeting

September 24, 2025

Distinguished Ministers and Representatives of the Friends,

Let me begin by expressing my heartfelt appreciation to all of you for gathering here today for the first FMCT Friends Ministerial Meeting.

Currently, divisions and confrontations in the international community is deepening, and we are facing a severe and complex security environment. Furthermore, trust in the framework of international cooperation based on multilateralism is also being undermined.

While the discussions in the disarmament machinery is in stagnation, North Korea is further advancing its nuclear and missile capabilities and a certain country continues to build up its nuclear forces in an opaque and rapid manner.

An FMCT we are aiming for is a framework that places a quantitative cap on nuclear weapons by banning the production of fissile material. This idea dates back to the "Atoms for Peace" speech delivered at the United Nations in 1953 by then-U.S. President Eisenhower. Although the start of negotiations was proposed several times between the East and West during the Cold War, it was never implemented.

In the 1990s, a resolution on the FMCT was adopted at the UN General Assembly, and discussions gained momentum. However, as you all know, for thirty years, to this day, it has not been realized.

This year marks 80 years since humanity's first nuclear test and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Since assuming the office of the Foreign Minister of Japan, I had the privilege to directly listen to the voices of many Hibakushas who earnestly call for nuclear disarmament, including those from Nihon Hidankyo, which won the Nobel Peace Prize last year.

Hibakushas have never given up to this day, continuing to pass on their hopes for a world without nuclear weapons. If we political leaders were to give up, confidence in the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime would be lost, and we would face the dangerous situation of potentially igniting an arms race amid an already severe geopolitical environment. We bear a responsibility to the many people around the world who seek peace.

Motivated by these sentiments, this past May, I attended the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference and called for efforts to build consensus based on a "spirit of dialogue and cooperation."

" Whatever may be the nature of the uncertainties and the tensions in which the world is placed today and whatever may be their causes, there should be no problem that cannot be resolved peacefully with the united strength of eighty nations which now constitute our organization (the United Nations). It would be utter folly for mankind, which today has entered upon the Atomic Age, to pursue a path that leads to its own annihilation."

This is an excerpt from a speech delivered in 1956 at the UN General Assembly by Foreign Minister Mamoru Shigemitsu, a predecessor from my hometown of Oita.

This UN Headquarters is filled with the political will toward nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. What is now required is to translate this will to the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT through dialogue and cooperation.

If we consider the efforts during the Cold War since President Eisenhower's speech as the first chapter, and the 30 years since the UNGA FMCT resolution in the 1990s after the Cold War as the second chapter, then the FMCT Friends represents an attempt to open up a new chapter, at a new stage where the post-Cold War period is said to have ended.

Japan is determined to steadily move forward toward the immediate commencement of negotiations, in cooperation with all the FMCT Friends gathered here today. In these challenging times, I look forward to carrying on the aspirations of our predecessors and writing a new chapter together.

Thank you for your attention.