Part VIII The Role of Civil Society

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Chapter 1 Overview

In recent years, civil society, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), has come to play an increasingly important role in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Collaborations between NGOs, which can act quickly, and governments as well as international organizations are indispensable, particularly in the emergency aid activities in post-conflict regions.

International cooperation, including NGOs, as exemplified in the so-called “Ottawa Process” on the anti-personnel mine issue, has been strengthened, and NGOs have been increasing their influence on national governments. In the field of nuclear weapons, for example, the representatives of 14 NGOs delivered their statements to the special NGO session, which was held for the first time at the NPT Review Conference in 2000.

The Japanese Government considers it meaningful to amply listen to the opinions of civil society including NGOs and to ensure collaboration with them in its endeavors to promote disarmament and non-proliferation, and thus conducts an active exchange of opinions with many NGOs and citizens. It also provides various types of cooperation, including support for symposia and forums on disarmament and non-proliferation.
Chapter 2 Holding of symposia and workshops

1. The Tokyo Forum

   In response to the nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998, the “Tokyo Forum for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament” was organized through the initiatives of then Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto and then Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi. A number of internationally recognized experts from the private sector gathered together to consider ways of maintaining and strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, in particular in South Asia, and of further promoting global nuclear disarmament. The forum was jointly hosted by the Japan Institute of International Affairs and the Hiroshima Peace Institute, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and co-chaired by Nobuo Matsunaga, Vice Chairman of the Japan Institute of International Affairs, and Yasushi Akashi, Ex-Executive Director of the Hiroshima Peace Institute (currently President of the Japan Center for Conflict Prevention). About 20 experts from Japan and abroad took part in this forum in their private capacities.

   After having four sessions, the Tokyo Forum published a report containing 17 key recommendations in July 1999, and asked that Kofi A. Annan, Secretary General of the United Nations would request the leaders and policy makers of the world to put these recommendations into practice. One of the concrete recommendations was to demand that the United States and Russia reduce their strategic nuclear warheads down to 1,000 with the aim of eventually achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Japan has been positively incorporating the recommendations of the report into its resolutions on nuclear disarmament submitted to the UN General Assembly.

2. International Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

   Just before the NPT Review Conference held in April-May 2000, an
international workshop titled “Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime: In the Face of a Possible Renewed Nuclear Arms Race” was held to discuss how to lead the conference to success. The workshop was hosted by the Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (Japan Institute of International Affairs). In addition, the “International Workshop on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation” (with the same sponsorship as above) was held in August of the same year to consider how to implement the “practical steps towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation” agreed upon at the NPT Review Conference. Experts on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation from various states, including the United States, Russia, China and India, participated in the workshop. In this workshop, a lively discussion was held on the promotion of disarmament negotiations that were at a stalemate, the prospects for the entry into force of the CTBT, and the influence of the deployment of Missile Defense.

The Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (Japan Institute of International Affairs) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs co-sponsored the workshop titled “Perspective of the NPT in the 21st Century—Toward the NPT Review Conference 2005” at the end of February 2002. This was just before the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference. A number of experts from the non-governmental sector and government officials from around the world participated in the workshop and engaged in a comprehensive discussion on important issues regarding the NPT.

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations University held a symposium titled “New Threats and Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction” in March 2003. At the symposium, an active discussion was held on the issue of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in Asia and the Middle East with the participation of researchers in Japan and abroad, diplomats of various countries, and the press.

3. Symposia on the elimination of chemical weapons

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United Nations University jointly
hosted a symposium titled “Towards the Elimination of Chemical Weapons—Roles of the OPCW and Japan” on October 1, 2003 on the occasion when Director-General Pfrirter of the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) visited Japan as an official guest of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from September 30 to October 5, 2003. At this symposium, Director-General Pfrirter delivered a keynote speech emphasizing the characteristics and significance of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and the importance of universalization (promotion of accession) of the CWC in Northeast Asia and Middle East. After his speech, participants, including relevant Japanese researchers and persons connected with chemical-related companies, conducted an active exchange of opinions and a question-and-answer session with respect to the methods of strengthening the CWC, including measures against chemical terrorism.

4. Assistance for exhibitions held overseas on the sufferings caused by atomic bombs

Japan, as the only country that has suffered from the devastation of atomic bombings, attaches much importance to conveying to the people of other countries the tragedy of nuclear devastation and the strong wish that this should not be inflicted again. From this standpoint, Japan has been supporting exhibitions held overseas on the suffering caused by atomic bombs. These exhibitions have been sponsored by local governments and NGOs. Recent examples of such assistance are as follows.

(1) October 2000—Exhibition in Italy (Forli), hosted by the City of Forli and supported by the Consulate-General of Japan in Milan
(2) November 2000 —Exhibition in Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo), hosted by the Executive Committee of Japan Festival 2000 and sponsored by the Embassy of Japan in Dominican Republic
(3) September 2001 —Exhibition in Russia (Volgograd), co-hosted by the Cities of Volgograd, Hiroshima, and Nagasaki with the assistance of the Embassy
of Japan in Russia for the transportation of the exhibits

(4) November 2002 — Exhibition in Canada (Ottawa) co-hosted by Diefenbunker Canada’s Cold War Museum and the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Embassy of Japan in Canada co-hosted related projects with the Museum.

(5) September 2003 — Exhibition in the United States (Atlanta) co-hosted by Emory University, and the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with indirect support from the Consulate-General of Japan in Atlanta for the advertising of the exhibition and the transportation of the exhibits

(6) September 2003 — Exhibition in Venezuela (Caracas) co-hosted by the Central University of Venezuela and the Embassy of Japan in Venezuela with the exhibition panel prepared by the Embassy of Japan in Venezuela

(7) October 2003 — Exhibition in the United Kingdom (Coventry) co-hosted by Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, and the Cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki with an address delivered by the Ambassador of Japan in the United Kingdom at the opening ceremony of the exhibition
Chapter 3 Dialogue and cooperation with NGOs

1. Nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation

The desire of the Japanese people to eliminate nuclear weapons is very strong as Japan is the only country in the world to have experienced disasters caused by atomic bombs. Thus, the activities of the Japanese NGOs for elimination of nuclear weapons, including the victims of atomic bombs and the families of those killed by atomic bombings, are extremely active, and also have special significance at an international level.

It is important for Japan to convey the message on the tragedy of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the world, and to continue its appeal to the international community not to repeat the disasters caused by nuclear weapons. The Japanese government exchanges opinions with NGOs in order to seek ways of advancing the nuclear disarmament process. For example, the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs attend the World Conference Against Atomic and Hydrogen Bombs held in Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August every year to exchange opinions through subcommittees. In addition, successive Vice Ministers for Foreign Affairs from 1994 onward have visited Hiroshima at least once, in principle, during his term in office to exchange opinions with associations of the victims of atomic bombs. Then Senior State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Kiyohiro Araki and Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs Kazunori Tanaka attended the “Nagasaki Global Citizens’ Assembly for the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons,” where Japanese and foreign NGOs that call for the elimination of nuclear weapons gather, in November 2000 and November 2003, respectively. They delivered an address at the opening ceremony, and the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also attended subcommittee meetings. At a town meeting of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs held in Hiroshima in November 2003, Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi gave a comprehensive explanation on Japan’s disarmament diplomacy and clearly stated that Japan takes it upon itself to ensure that the tragedies of
Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain in the memories of mankind.

Furthermore, the Ministry has also been active in exchanging opinions and information with various NGO representatives, and attending their meetings in Tokyo or at other conference venues, before, during and after international conferences such as the UN General Assembly, the NPT Review Conference, and the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT.

2. Landmines, small arms and light weapons

(1) Collaboration among the government, NGOs, and international organizations is extremely important in dealing with weapons that actually produce victims in post-conflict areas, such as landmines, small arms and light weapons. NGOs play an indispensable role as implementation bodies especially in mine clearance, collection of small arms and light weapons, and support projects for affected countries and victims in post-conflict areas. Since activities in these projects are dangerous, relevant countries, NGOs, and international organizations have to act in close cooperation and in unison.

(2) Examples of cooperation with NGOs in such field include mine clearance activities in Afghanistan and a project to collect small arms and light weapons in Cambodia. Japan has been supporting mine clearance operations in Afghanistan through international organizations since 2001, and it is seven international NGOs stationed in Afghanistan and nine local NGOs that are actually carrying out mine clearance activities on the ground. Specific action policy for carrying out these activities as well as important matters including research on needs for mine clearance are decided with coordination among the NGOs operating on the ground, international organizations controlling NGOs, and Japan.

In Cambodia, Japan has been implementing a project to offer development in return for voluntary submission of small arms and light weapons (Weapons Reduction and Development for Peace Project). Through the project, local residents in areas where remaining weapons are aggravating public
security are educated and persuaded to submit small arms and light weapons in return for construction of roads and schools. The prerequisites for implementing the project include persuasion of local residents, research on specific development needs, and activities by local NGOs that have an understanding of the subject area. In Cambodia, the project has been implemented in cooperation with five local NGOs.

(3) In addition, it should be noted that NGOs have so far been calling attention to the issues of landmines, small arms and light weapons in the international community and in their countries. In particular, NGOs have played a large role in dealing with landmines. Especially, the “International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)” led the international opinion for elimination of anti-personnel mines and largely contributed to the adoption of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and On Their Destruction (Ottawa Convention).

(4) In this way, the government, NGOs and international organizations are in a mutually complementary cooperative relationship in the fields of landmines, small arms and light weapons. It is thus important to deal with such issues by promoting cooperation with NGOs.
Chapter 4 Disarmament and education

It has come to be widely recognized in the international community that education on disarmament and non-proliferation to citizens is important in promoting efforts to address the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation.

1. United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme

The decision to implement the UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme was taken at the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament in 1978 to train experts on disarmament issues, particularly in developing countries. Every year since 1979, participants from various states, including experienced diplomats and officials of the national defense department who are engaged in disarmament, have participated in this Fellowship Programme. Participants deepen their knowledge in the field by visiting international organizations, research institutions related to disarmament and non-proliferation and relevant countries.

With regard to the involvement of Japan in this programme, then Prime Minister Zenko Suzuki made a proposal to invite the participants in the Fellowship Programme to Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the Second Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament in 1982. A group of about 25 participants have been invited to visit Japan every year since 1983. The number of participants comprising mainly of diplomats who had visited Japan totaled more than 480 in 2003, the 21st anniversary of the invitation. Participants receive briefings on the disarmament and non-proliferation policies of Japan and also have opportunities to gain insight into the reality of atomic bombing and to learn about the unique circumstances of Japan as the only country to have suffered from the devastation of atomic bombs, through visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

A large number of diplomats that participated in the Fellowship Programme are now actively working on the front lines of global disarmament diplomacy, and
many of them often comment on the deep impression that their visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki had on them. As can be seen from these examples, it is very meaningful to invite the Fellowship Programme participants to Japan as a way of strongly communicating the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons to the world based on the Japanese people’s own experience with atomic bombing, and Japan’s efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation. From this point of view, Japan will continue to cooperate in carrying out the Fellowship Programme.

2. Meeting of UN Group of Governmental Experts on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education

At the UN Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters held in New York in 2000, it was pointed out that, in order to break the current stalemate in nuclear disarmament, it would be necessary to actively educate the younger generation on nuclear disarmament issues. Based on this deliberation, a draft resolution was submitted to the effect requesting the Secretary-General to carry out preparations for a study to evaluate the current situation and to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education. The draft was adopted by consensus at the 55th UN General Assembly in the same year.

In accordance with the resolution, the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education (consisted of 10 experts from the governments, NGOs, and research institutions; from Japan, Mr. Yukiya Amano, then Minister, Embassy of Japan in the United States) has held four sessions since 2001, and the “study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” was submitted to the Secretary-General in August 2002.

At the 57th UN General Assembly in November 2002, a draft resolution titled “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” was adopted unanimously. The draft resolution requested implementation of a series of recommendations to vitalize disarmament and non-proliferation education that were included in the report prepared by the group.
3. Japan’s own efforts

In response to the report and resolutions mentioned above, Japan has been carrying out projects to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education as follows.

(1) Invitation of disarmament educators

In November 2002, Japan invited Ms. K. Sullivan who is an eminent disarmament educator in the United States. Ms. Sullivan conducted classes about the necessity of nuclear disarmament at high schools in Tokyo and Hiroshima, as well as exchanged opinions with NGOs and those who were suffering because of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Japan will continue to conduct projects such as this not only for students but also for various groups of people such as politicians, educators, and scientists while using various opportunities other than schools, such as seminars and workshops.

(2) Submission of a working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education

(Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference)

Japan submitted a working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference held from April to May 2003. In addition, Japan served as a coordinator of eight countries that jointly submitted the working paper, and Ambassador Kuniko Inoguchi, Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament introduced the said paper at the beginning of the committee.

The working paper points out that a great importance should be attached to recommendations stated in the “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” that was submitted to the UN General Assembly in 2002, and then mentions that the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference should welcome efforts for disarmament and non-proliferation
education by civil society, NGOs, etc. and should also encourage such organizations to include NPT-related information, such as the achievements of the NPT Review Conferences and each country’s efforts to implement the NPT, in their various educational programs.

(3) Holding of disarmament education seminars

In August 2003, Japan gathered about 50 active teachers of elementary schools, junior high schools, and high schools within Osaka City, and held a disarmament education seminar jointly with the United Nations during the UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in Osaka. In the seminar, experts participating in the conference gave a presentation on ways to build a peace fort in the minds of young people and desirable ways to provide disarmament and non-proliferation education. After that, experts and teachers actively exchanged opinions.