

STATEMENT BY H.E. Mr. FUKAZAWA Yoichi
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
2024 High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament

Mr. President,
Distinguished colleagues,

At the outset, I would like to express our sincere appreciation and reaffirm our full support to the President of the Conference on Disarmament, as well as Madam Secretary-General of the CD and her team for their valuable work.

Mr. President,

The world is now at a turning point in history and the free and open international order based on the rule of law is facing serious challenges. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a clear violation of international law and an outrageous act that shakes the very foundation of the international order. Japan absolutely cannot accept Russia's nuclear threats, let alone its use of nuclear weapons, under any circumstances. In addition, Russia's procurement of North Korea's ballistic missiles is direct violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions and their use against Ukraine is absolutely unacceptable. Japan expresses grave concern about potential transfer in return of nuclear or ballistic missile technology from Russia to North Korea, which would seriously undermine the non-proliferation regime that we all value. Japan calls on all UN Member States to fully abide by all relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including the ban on transfer of all arms and related material to and from North Korea, and on any transfer of nuclear- or ballistic missile-related technology to North Korea.

In the Indo-Pacific region, historical changes in power balances are occurring, and the security environment surrounding Japan is rapidly becoming even more severe. In the vicinity of Japan, military buildups, including of nuclear weapons and missiles, are rapidly advancing in an opaque manner, coupled with mounting pressures by attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force.

Japan remains seriously concerned about the development of North Korea's nuclear and missile activities, including its repeated ballistic missile launches and

escalatory rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons. Such activities pose a serious challenge to the international community. Japan reiterates its strong commitment to the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges and urges North Korea to abide by all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and return at an early date to full compliance with the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

Mr. President,

Against such a backdrop, there is an urgent necessity for the CD to fulfill its role as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. “A New Agenda for Peace” proposed by UN Secretary-General Guterres points out the deadlock of existing disarmament institutions and the need to reinvigorate them. The division besetting the world over disarmament will be more entrenched should the current stagnation continue.

As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is strongly committed to leading international efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons with the NPT as the cornerstone of international disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Japan will spare no efforts to advance realistic and practical efforts in line with "Hiroshima Action Plan" presented by Prime Minister KISHIDA.

Here at the CD, Japan reemphasizes the importance of the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, an FMCT. We view this as a matter of urgency to avoid a possible reversal of the continued downward trend of the number of nuclear weapons. As highlighted in the High-Level Event on an FMCT that Japan co-hosted with Australia and the Philippines last September, we should build on substantial discussions accumulated over three decades and gather collective wisdom to break this impasse without any further delay. To this end, Japan is determined to continue its efforts to heighten political momentum for commencing negotiations of the FMCT. Pending the entry into force of such a treaty, Japan calls upon all relevant states to declare or maintain moratoriums on fissile material production for the aforementioned purposes.

Furthermore, Japan remains strongly committed to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) to effectively operationalize the achievements of the CD. Japan urges all states, particularly the remaining States listed in its Annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT, and, pending its entry into force, urges all relevant states to declare or maintain existing moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions.

I would also like to underline the importance of transparency as the foundation of all nuclear disarmament measures. In the era of heightened tension and diverging positions, enhancing transparency, including on nuclear forces by nuclear-weapon States could contribute to building trust and fostering conducive environment for further progress of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

In addition to disarmament measures, responsible engagements with arms control framework are of benefit for the international community. In this context, we urge the Russian Federation to return to full implementation of the New START Treaty. Further, Japan expresses strong hope for dialogues leading to the development of a broader framework of arms control, which involves not only the U.S. and Russia but other countries and covers a wider range of weapon systems.

Mr. President,

We have recently embarked upon new discussions about emerging technologies, including AI, across many initiatives and fora. We welcome further discussions to deepen our understanding and promote responsible behavior in this area. In addition, Japan reiterates our commitment to accelerate consensus building on lethal autonomous weapons systems within the framework of the CCW.

With regards to outer space, Japan highly values the substantive and inclusive discussions in the international community, especially the Open-Ended Working Group on "Reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours". We look forward to contributing constructively to further efforts for the

objective of preventing an arms race in outer space.

Mr. President,

In light of the current severe security environment, there is a greater imperative than ever to build upon past discussions and to break the prolonged stalemate of the CD. Moreover, while the CD enjoys the membership of key stakeholders, including all nuclear-weapon States and nuclear-possessing countries, inclusive participation is key in ensuring that its future outcomes become universal. With regards to inclusiveness, Japan promotes the Women, Peace and Security agenda within the field of disarmament. Japan looks forward to cooperating further to ensure that the CD fulfills its mandate as the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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