



Statement by Ambassador Ichiro OGASAWARA

at the CD Plenary Meeting

May 18th 2021

Thematic Debate under Agenda Item 2:

“Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”

Mr. President,

Japan would like to express its sincere gratitude to you, Ambassador Yuri Borissov STERK, for setting the thematic debate under Agenda Item 2, “Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters”. I also greatly appreciate Mr. Wilfred WAN of UNIDIR and Ms. Jenifer MACKBY of Federation of American Scientists for their useful and well-articulated presentation regarding nuclear risk reduction. Today, let me share Japan’s position on this topic.

Mr. President,

The total elimination of nuclear weapons is a common goal of the international community that Japan shares. As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan continues its efforts to this goal based upon a realistic and pragmatic approach so that the tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never be repeated. It is also in this vein that Japan has submitted draft resolutions on the elimination of nuclear weapons to the UN General Assembly.

Efforts towards nuclear risk reduction contribute to preserving and promoting international peace and security and to building the trust and confidence conducive to further cooperation. Yet nuclear risk reduction efforts do not provide a substitute for implementation of the nuclear disarmament obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Instead, nuclear risk reduction efforts should complement and be coupled with sustained nuclear disarmament efforts.

Mr. President,

From the perspective of nuclear risk reduction as well, Japan welcomes the five-year extension of the New START Treaty announced by the United States of America and the Russian Federation in February this year. The progress achieved by this extension should expand to constructing a broader arms control framework that includes a wider range of nations beyond the United States and Russian Federation, and weapons systems. The resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons (A/RES/75/71) submitted by Japan and adopted in the UN General Assembly in autumn last year also reaffirms the special responsibility of nuclear-weapon states to initiate arms control dialogues.

How to avoid an escalation caused by miscalculation or by misunderstanding is one of the vital issues to be addressed in the context of nuclear risk reduction. Given the current international security environment

and emergence of new technologies, the relevance of such issues continues to increase. It is for this reason that Japan's Resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons adopted by the UN General Assembly last year is encouraging *all States possessing nuclear weapons to take actions to reduce the risks of nuclear detonation occurring either by miscalculation or by misunderstanding, and to make further efforts to this end*. The measures envisaged to this purport in this resolution include *transparency and dialogue on nuclear doctrines and postures, military-to-military dialogues, hotlines or information and data exchanges*. We proposed these languages as agreeable elements for the outcome documents of the upcoming NPT Review Conference. These actions should be taken by all nuclear-weapon countries regardless of the size of their nuclear forces. Smaller sized forces cannot be an excuse for not conducting measures to improve transparency and dialogues.

Mr. President,

In 2017, Japan launched the Eminent Persons Group process. In October 2019, the Group published its Chair's report, full of insights and inspiring thoughts illustrating further steps towards nuclear disarmament, and the report makes a variety of proposals. It stated, for example, that *NWS should take measures to reduce the risk of use, including by ensuring the safety and security of their nuclear weapons, weapon-usable nuclear materials, and related infrastructure*.

Meaningful discussions related to nuclear risk reduction are also taking place in the work of various cross-regional groups such as the NPDI, the Stockholm Initiative and the CEND, in all of which Japan has actively participated. Some of these discussions have resulted in valuable concrete recommendations. Japan will continue to actively participate in these discussions and strive for our common purpose of reducing the risk of nuclear weapons.

I thank you, Mr. President.