

STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. OMI Asako
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2020 High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament
25 February 2020, Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. President,
Distinguished colleagues, and
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate you, Your Excellency Ambassador FORADORI, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of the full support and cooperation of my delegation. I would also like to express my gratitude to Ms. Valovaya, Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and her team for their support for the work of the Conference.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Achieving a world free of nuclear weapons is now the shared goal of the international community. As the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is fully aware of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of these weapons. This is why it is our solemn responsibility to lead international efforts towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President,

We are in a severe international security environment. There are various different approaches towards a world without nuclear weapons and views on how to best advance nuclear disarmament in a concrete and practical manner. Last year, Japan submitted a draft resolution to the United Nations General Assembly which was adopted with the support of 160 countries. The resolution encourages Member States to take immediate and united action while engaging in future-oriented dialogue on nuclear disarmament. It reaffirms the responsibility of all NPT States parties to remain committed to the full and steady implementation of all aspects of the Treaty, including Article VI. While we are fully aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, it is nevertheless necessary to address real security threats. With this resolution, Japan underlined the importance of promoting realistic and practical measures to be undertaken in cooperation between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states. Japan is confident that this resolution offers a solid basis to achieve substantive progress on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. President,

The CD is the only multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament, which brings together key stakeholders, including all nuclear-weapon possessing countries. As members of such an essential body, it is our shared responsibility to achieve tangible results. However, the CD has been in a stalemate for more than two decades. The CD should be a venue where member States are willing to understand divergent views and to compromise while seeking common ground. Building upon previous negotiations, we need to prioritize substantive discussions on agenda items according to their degree of maturity. From this perspective, Japan reiterates the importance of the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT).

It is essential to discuss emerging technologies in addition to the traditional agenda of the CD, as underlined in the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament. It is urgent for the CD to resume its substantive work in order to address the current needs and challenges we are facing. Discussions on the working methods are important in order to revitalize the work of the CD. Japan highly appreciates the consecutive efforts made by former and current Presidents, Ambassador BELBAKI of Algeria and your Excellency, Ambassador FORADORI of Argentina, and other P6 members, aimed at reaching consensus on the adoption of a Programme of Work including the establishment of subsidiary bodies. We encourage its adoption in order to resume substantive discussions and fulfill the mandate of the CD at the earliest possible date. Japan will continue to support any efforts made by your Excellency and other P6 countries.

Mr. President,

The year 2020 also marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Maintaining and strengthening the NPT, the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, contributes to improving international security. Japan proposed the resolution to the United Nations General Assembly in order to seek a meaningful outcome of the NPT Review Conference. Japan will continue to make concrete proposals, in close cooperation with the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) members towards a successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference, based on the NPDI Joint Ministerial Statement issued on 23 November 2019 in Nagoya, Japan. Building on a series of outcomes of the "Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament", Japan also intends to organize a track 1.5 meeting next month. The outcome of the meeting will be presented to the NPT Review Conference.

Mr. President,

In parallel to nuclear disarmament, we should work together on nuclear non-proliferation. Japan continues to support the U.S. – North Korea process. Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of North Korea's weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in accordance with relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Furthermore, we call on all member States to fully implement relevant UNSC resolutions.

Mr. President,

Last but not least, I would like to stress that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education contributes to realizing a world without nuclear weapons. Education is a valuable tool to foster a better understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and of potential nuclear risks. Education nurtures the critical thinking skills needed to bring us closer to our common goal. It is crucial to engage the younger generation, the leaders of the future, while integrating a gender perspective into our work.

Thank you for your attention.

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