

STATEMENT BY TOSHIO SANO
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 71ST SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

GENERAL DEBATE

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Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to extend my congratulations to you, Ambassador Boukadoum, on your assumption of the Chairmanship to this important First Committee. I assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation, and look forward to closely working with you, your team, and all other colleagues to carry out our important tasks.

Mr. Chairman,

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in wartime, Japan has been keen towards the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Against the backdrop of the changing nuclear disarmament landscape over the past several years, the 2015 NPT Review

Conference, which did not agree on the substantive part of the draft final document, failed to show the guidelines of nuclear disarmament towards 2020, and the nearly two decades' deadlock of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) fueled the frustration among the non-nuclear weapon states on the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, the Open-Ended Working Group on taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in Geneva failed to adopt a consensus report despite many states' efforts to bridge the differences on their various disarmament approaches. Those developments altogether cause us a serious concern.

Japan has consistently maintained that engagement of nuclear weapon states, as the major stakeholders, is imperative in nuclear disarmament deliberations in order to carry out effective disarmament measures. We are convinced that, to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, the most effective way is to take practical and concrete measures, fully taking into account the security considerations in the regions facing security challenges involving the threats of nuclear weapons, such as those of the DPRK.

Whatever paths we take to achieve our common goal, we must avoid further division and fragmentation of the international community, and instead pursue consensus-based efforts in taking

forward nuclear disarmament measures.

Mr. Chairman,

The NPT is the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. Japan believes it is imperative to redouble international efforts to further strengthen the NPT with a view to securing the world's peace and stability. In this vein, we once again call upon the nuclear-weapon States to take the agreed steps contained in the Final Documents of the Review Conferences in 1995, 2000, and 2010. Moreover, we strongly urge nuclear-weapon States to take further concrete disarmament measures during the 2020 NPT Review Cycle. Among other things, Japan underscores the importance of increasing the level of transparency in their nuclear arsenals and strengthening their efforts, including providing more frequent and further detailed reports with numerical data on nuclear forces. We urge all nuclear-weapon States and states possessing nuclear weapons to take further efforts to reduce all types of nuclear weapons, and eventually multilateralize nuclear weapon reduction negotiations. Bearing in mind the review cycle towards the 2020 NPT Review Conference, Japan once again will submit to this committee its resolution entitled, "United Action with Renewed Determination towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons," which sets out practical and concrete measures acceptable to most of the

states. We hope that this resolution will garner wide-ranging support as it did in previous years.

Mr. Chairman,

With regards to a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT), the most significant progress in recent years was the successful conclusion of the FMCT Group of Governmental Experts (GGE). The FMCT GGE, an initiative led by Canada, undertook the most in-depth discussion on aspects of a treaty and successfully concluded their own task in 2015. This substantive consensus report presents all possible “essential elements,” including treaty objectives, scope, definitions, verification requirements and institutional arrangements of a treaty. This year, very unfortunately, the CD once again failed to embark upon the launch of negotiation, despite some serious attempts to do so. It is high time, therefore, for all of us to explore further as to how the negotiation of an FMCT, the most extensively discussed legal instrument to date, be commenced. Japan, for its part, calls upon all delegations to explore every possible way to commence negotiations on an FMCT.

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the opening of the

Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) for signature. In this regard, Japan welcomes the outcome of the Eighth CTBT Ministerial Meeting in New York and Ministerial Meeting in Vienna commemorating the 20th anniversary and the adoption of Security Council resolution 2310 on the CTBT. Japan also welcomes the recent ratification by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland.

Japan once again calls upon the remaining non-ratifying States, the Annex II countries in particular, to sign and ratify the Treaty without further delay. Japan affirms its confidence in the international community's continued efforts towards the early entry into force of the Treaty. Japan applauds the effective functioning of the International Monitoring System (IMS) which greatly contributed to collecting and analyzing data regarding the series of DPRK's nuclear tests and the tireless efforts taken by CTBTO, under the strong leadership of the Executive-Secretary, Dr. Lassina Zerbo.

Mr. Chairman,

Recently, the DPRK conducted its fifth nuclear test. Japan condemns the DPRK in the strongest terms and urges it to immediately comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. In addition, the DPRK has

launched this year alone more than 20 ballistic missiles, including SLBMs, some of which fell into Japan's exclusive economic zone. Furthermore, on the occasion of the fifth nuclear test, it claimed to have successfully detonated a nuclear warhead. The series of launches of missiles and the claim of successful detonation of a nuclear warhead have brought the threat of DPRK a dimension altogether different from what has transpired until now.

All Member States have an obligation to steadily implement a series of Security Council resolutions, including resolution 2270 and also should demonstrate an unmistakable attitude in addressing this threat of a new dimension. Japan will continue to coordinate closely with relevant countries towards the adoption of a new Security Council resolution that includes additional sanctions. The universal condemnation by the international community demonstrates that prohibition of nuclear testing is a de facto international norm. In order to make this prohibition a legal obligation, the early entry into force of the CTBT is imperative.

Mr. Chairman,

In June 2016, Japan hosted the third plenary meeting of the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification

(IPNDV) in Tokyo. This partnership deserves more attention from the international community since credible and irreversible nuclear disarmament requires a robust verification mechanism and this plurilateral initiative with the engagement of both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear -weapon states has demonstrated excellent examples of collaboration between them as well as CBMs. In this regard, I would like to commend the active engagement of the US government and the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) reached the conclusion that the government of Syria used chemical weapons in two locations, and ISIL conducted mustard gas attacks in Aleppo. Japan condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons and the violation of the CWC by a State Party to the Convention. Holding those responsible to account is crucial.

Concerning the issue of the abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs), Japan has been committed to making the fullest possible efforts to complete the destruction of the ACWs in China through close coordination and cooperation with people and the government of China. We have excavated and declared more than 54,000 ACWs

to the OPCW. As of the end of September, we destroyed approximately 45,000 ACWs. In Haerbaling, the largest burial site of ACWs in Jilin Province, the test destruction operations and excavation operations are actively proceeding, with a view to completing the destruction in Haerbaling within the year 2022.

With regard to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), Japan expects that the discussion held during the Intercessional Process (ISP) as well as two preparatory committees help us reach an agreement to strengthen the BWC in the 8th Review Conference in November. In order to reinforce the Convention, Japan emphasizes, among other issues, the review of the intercessional process, the improvement of the scientific and technological development review framework, strengthening national implementation and the promotion of collaboration with international organizations.

Mr. Chairman,

With the view of the 5th CCW Review Conference to be held this December, having recognized the growing interest of the international community in the issue of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS), Japan welcomes the recommendation of the 3rd Informal Meeting of Experts and supports discussing this issue further in order to deepen our common understanding

on the main elements, including identification of characteristics, elaboration of a working definition of LAWS and application of international law.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, I would like to conclude my statement by stressing the potential function of confidence building in disarmament. Ensuring national security and advancing disarmament should not be taken as a contradiction with each other, but are in fact mutually complimentary. Disarmament will definitely improve the regional and global security environment and enhance confidence among States, which provides the virtuous circle for further disarmament. Japan strongly calls upon states concerned to take action to mitigate the tensions in each region and share the common goal of achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons through advancing nuclear disarmament and strengthening non-proliferation efforts centered around the NPT.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.