



DELEGATION OF JAPAN  
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Statement by Ambassador OGASAWARA Ichiro

At the Plenary of the Conference on Disarmament on 15 June 2021

On Agenda Item 5: New Types of Weapons of Mass Destruction and New  
Systems of Such Weapons; Radiological weapons

Mr. President,

At the outset, I would like to thank you, Mr. President for holding this CD plenary as an opportunity to exchange and expand our views on Agenda item 5 ‘New types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons including radiological weapons’. Japan highly appreciates any initiative that promotes substantive discussions within this important forum. I would also like to thank Ambassador Ambrazevich for his timely and informative presentations that add valuable depth and perspective to our discussions.

Japan values the work conducted by Member States within Subsidiary Body 5 of the 2018 session of the CD. In addition, the thematic discussions on agenda item 5, 6, and 7 at the CD plenary held in September of last year were useful.

Regarding cybersecurity and lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS), we are pleased that our joint efforts is unfolding the discussions within the relevant frameworks of the United Nations and the CCW. Indeed, Japan is actively participating in these discussions. We hope also that the discussion regarding responsible behavior in Space will make further progress this year.

Today, the development of science and technology, as well as their corresponding military applications are evolving at breakneck speed. It is now difficult to overstate the impact of technological innovations, not only on our economies and societies, but also on security issues.

Indeed, some of today's emerging technologies have been fundamentally changing military operations and may become game-changers of security. At the same time, the dazzling speed of these technological advancements makes it even more difficult to consider effective arms control on these technologies and their applications. These observations underline the increasing importance of dialogue, transparency and confidence building measures between states, given the impact of emerging technologies on security,

In order to better prepare for future specific discussions within the CD, it is of

great value to accurately understand scientific and technological progress, the current state of their applications and the risks associated therewith, to promote common understanding on these crucial matters. In this sense, Japan greatly appreciates today's opportunity to exchange our views on these subjects.

Mr. President,

In the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation, there are a wide range of technological areas that could one day be the subject of our future discussions. Japan deems the following three points to be particularly relevant and in need of special consideration, no matter which area we may discuss.

The first point is the application of the existing international law and international norms. From the perspective of Japan, a country which emphasizes always the rule of law in the international community, it is imperative to comply with international law including international humanitarian law, especially when it comes to the use of force - this includes any new types of weapons of mass destruction. At the same time, improved transparency, strengthened confidence-building measures and better communication between countries are of great value. In this regard, I would like to reaffirm the importance of

enhancing domestic implementation of international humanitarian law through, among other things, the weapons review prescribed in Article 36 of the First Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 1949.

The second point is the dual-use nature of technologies. In the fields of space, cyberspace, and artificial intelligence, many emerging technologies have both civilian and potential military applications. While emerging technologies may have significant military and security implications, the benefits of civil use of these emerging technologies to the economy and society are also immeasurable. Therefore, it is advisable not to impose unreasonable restrictions on the development of useful technology in the name of arms control. Here, the key is learning how to strike the optimal balance between these two different requirements.

The third point is the multiplicity of stakeholders. As is clear within the AI and cyber domains, private actors are playing an increasingly significant role in technological innovations that may have major security implications. Therefore, in order to conduct a meaningful discussion, participation from multiple layers of stakeholders is even more desirable. In the same vein, inputs from the experts are most welcome from both governments and private sectors.

This is why Japan's UNGA Resolution entitled "Joint courses of action and a future-oriented dialogue" (A/RES/75/71) "encourages all States to conduct dialogue regarding the possible impacts of developments in science and technology on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation".

The Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, which was launched by the Government of Japan, also engaged in work on this subject. Its Chair's report which was published in October 2019 pointed out, "All states should assess how new domains and emerging technologies –including cyber, space, lethal autonomous weapons and artificial intelligence –might affect strategic stability and the dangers of nuclear-weapon use, and contemplate how to mitigate or reduce of disruption."

Mr. President,

To conclude, let me reiterate the importance of promoting future-oriented discussion on new technologies and their impact. Japan is confident that the CD is an important venue for such discussions. Japan hopes that substantial discussions will progress within the CD by narrowing down the themes based

on a common understanding among Member States, while avoiding duplication with other tracks.

I thank you, Mr. President.