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STATEMENT BY NOBUSHIGE TAKAMIZAWA
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 73ND SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION -
OCTOBER 23, 2018, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

Japan is striving for arms control, disarmament, and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in order to achieve a safe and peaceful world. Nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons constitute a serious threat to international security. Furthermore, the use of chemical and biological weapons by state and non-state actors is of growing concern. The use of both weapons cannot be allowed under any circumstances and Japan believes that the following actions should be faithfully pursued.

Last year marks the 20th anniversary since the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the establishment of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). Although

progress has been made under the Convention, the continuous use of chemical weapons in recent years has become a serious and urgent issue.

The use of chemical weapons is a grave violation of international law and is also an immediate threat to the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The international community should be united in condemning its use and perpetrators should be identified and held accountable.

In this regard, Japan welcomes and fully supports the decision at the 4th Special Conference of the States Parties of the Convention that the OPCW works for a tool to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons. Japan looks forward to working closely with other States Parties to put the decision into action.

Mr. Chairman,

It is essential to strengthen efforts to accelerate the implementation of national measures, which serve as a fundamental tool for preventing the

re-emergence and proliferation of chemical weapons. Moreover, the increased threat posed by non-State actors, including terrorists, is becoming an imminent issue. We must prevent, without fail, chemical weapons and toxic chemicals from falling into the wrong hands.

Japan also finds it essential to continue our work towards the universalization of the CWC. For our part, we have provided expertise and technical assistance to facilitate non-member States to join the Convention. We encourage the remaining non-member States to reconsider their position, or to facilitate their respective internal processes for early accession.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan takes its obligations under the CWC seriously, as we have invested a significant amount of human and financial resources for fulfilling one of our obligations, which is to destroy abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) in China. It is accurate to say that the ACW project entails various challenges and uncertainties, but we have been making consistent progress.

For instance, approximately 51,000 of the 63,000 ACWs recovered have been destroyed. Let me also stress that progress has only been made possible with the valuable on-site joint efforts with China, in which we each bear respective responsibilities. I would like to underline that, without such bilateral constructive cooperation and close coordination, this unprecedented, difficult project could not have been carried out. Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue all possible efforts to advance this project.

Mr. Chairman,

Along with the CWC, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has also played a vital role for international peace and security. Japan remains aligned with States Parties and fully commits itself to strengthen the BWC. In this regard, Japan welcomes that the intersessional programme was agreed during the Meeting of States Parties held last December and the Meetings of Experts successfully took place in this past August. We look forward to further progress in future meetings.

Japan continues to stress the importance of the collaboration with international organizations, as well as promotion of confidence building measures, and national implementation in order to reinforce the BWC. To this end, Japan intends to implement a project to organize related workshops and seminars with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and BWC Implementation Support Unit (ISU). In this one and a half year project, we are aiming to strengthen national and international capacity to prepare for and respond to deliberate use of biological weapons, and to promote the BWC national implementation in the South East Asia and Pacific Region.

We believe that all stakeholders' effort and cooperation to build up common understanding and take effective actions is a key to reinforce the CWC and BWC regime. Japan will continue to contribute in this regard.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.