

Statement by OGASAWARA Ichiro
Ambassador of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament
At the First Committee of the 75th 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 Santos Maraver, on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this First Committee. I assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the 75th year since the first use of nuclear weapons. As Prime Minister Mr. SUGA stated in his address at the UNGA, Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. With this resolve, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan will spare no effort in order to realize a world without nuclear weapons.

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, which serves as the cornerstone of the international regime for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The postponement of the 10th NPT Review Conference, by no means, undermines the urgency of the issues regarding nuclear weapons. In order to maintain and further reinforce the NPT regime, it is imperative that the Review Conference produce a meaningful outcome. All States Parties, both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, should unite and join forces to realize this shared purpose. Japan is ready to do its fair share in this endeavor.

At the same time, we are undeniably living in a severe and unstable security environment with growing international tensions. The measures that we take to reach our shared goal – the realization of a world without nuclear weapons – must take into account this reality. Realizing a world without nuclear weapons requires nuclear weapon states to take concrete measures.

In this respect, Japan will submit a resolution titled “Joint Courses of Action and Future-oriented Dialogue towards a world without nuclear weapons” again this year with some updates. This resolution provides a common denominator on a wide-range of issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation while confronting new challenges. We hope that this resolution will garner wide support from the member States.

Mr. Chairman,

Efforts to increase transparency and accountability through reporting on nuclear arsenals, doctrines and policies, including concrete disarmament measures taken and to be taken, will contribute to increasing trust and confidence among all member States. Concrete

actions should be taken to reduce the risks of nuclear detonation occurring either by miscalculation or by misunderstanding. Deepening of substantive discussions towards the FMCT negotiation, various efforts to promote the entry into force of the CTBT without delay, and disarmament and non-proliferation education are also the examples of actions that can be jointly undertaken by all member States. With regard to the CTBT, on October 1st, Foreign Ministers of the Friends of the CTBT, jointly released video messages, where Japan's Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. MOTEGI reaffirmed our commitment to the CTBT to deter nuclear tests.

Japan also underscores the indispensable role of effective and credible nuclear disarmament verification, and has made substantive contributions to the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification and the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification.

Last November, Japan hosted the 10th Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). At the meeting, the NPDI adopted the Joint Ministerial Statement to demonstrate NPDI's commitment to upholding and strengthening the NPT regime. Japan also continues to support the efforts of the CEND initiative as one of the practical approaches for substantive nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, in March this year, Japan organized a meeting with the attendance of government officials both from nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states as well as non-governmental experts, which built on discussions of the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, established by the Government of Japan in 2017. The meeting, focused on "hard questions" that are unavoidable in realistically eliminating nuclear weapons.

On arms control, Japan welcomes that the U.S. and Russia have resumed their talks on nuclear arms control, which builds on their efforts to reduce the number of nuclear weapons from the peak of the Cold War. The U.S. has been committed to effective arms control and has pointed out the importance of an arms control framework involving the U.S., Russia, and China, which targets a wider scope of weapons systems. Japan supports such U.S. efforts. Furthermore, in light of such a positive trend, Japan welcomes and encourages China to continue its efforts to fulfil its responsibility as a nuclear weapon state and an important player in the international community and to engage in bilateral dialogue with the U.S. on arms control as a first step in accordance with the obligation to negotiate in good faith under the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan is deeply concerned about North Korea's continued development of nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities. Japan reaffirms its strong commitment to the goal of achieving complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement (CVID) of all of North Korea's nuclear weapons, existing nuclear programs, and related facilities as well as ballistic missiles of all ranges in accordance with relevant UNSCRs. Furthermore, we call on all member States to fully implement relevant UNSCRs.

Mr. Chairman,

We have witnessed the repeated use of chemical weapons in recent years. The use of chemical weapons by anyone under any circumstances is reprehensible and entirely contrary to international norms. In this regard, the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has an important role in establishing facts surrounding allegations of the use of chemical weapons and identifying its perpetrators. Japan appreciates and continues to support its professional, impartial and independent work. Japan is also committed to promoting the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and has organized seminars and workshops in partnership with the UNODA for this purpose. In order to ensure the success of the 9th Review Conference of the BWC in 2021, Japan will collaborate with other States Parties to achieve concrete outcomes to strengthen the BWC regime.

Mr. Chairman,

Conventional arms, applied in warfare and used by non-state actors, remain a major source of suffering and loss of life. Member States now need to stand united to work on conventional arms control and disarmament, referred to as “Disarmament that Saves Lives” in the Secretary General’s Disarmament Agenda. It is for this reason that Japan contributed two million US dollars to Saving Lives Entity, or SALIENT. For the same reason, Japan will submit to the committee the resolution on “The Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects,” to which Japan trusts that Members States will extend their support.

The year 2020 marks the 10th anniversary of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. Yet, severe consequences caused by cluster munitions remain a serious threat to human security. As a major contributor in UXO clearance, Japan will continue its support for further implementation and universalization of the convention, and looks forward to constructive discussions in the Second Review Conference in November. Japan welcomes the ongoing discussions on emerging technologies in the area of LAWS within the CCW framework, and will also continue its contribution to the international rule-making effort.

Mr. Chairman,

While our society is becoming increasingly reliant on space systems, the outer space environment is changing rapidly, and risks against its sustainable and stable use are becoming more serious as outer space is becoming increasingly congested, contested and competitive. Japan supports in principle the idea of preventing an arms race in outer space. We believe that TCBMs are pragmatic and near-term measures to increase trust and prevent misperception and miscalculations in space activities. The international community should reach a common understanding on ways to reduce threats to space systems in order to maintain outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable, and sustainable environment, free from an arms race. Japan underscores the need to characterize responsible behavior, which would be a practical step to further develop and implement norms, rules and principles in outer space.

Mr. Chairman,

I believe we need to focus on implementation, initiative and interaction through proactive, professional, and pragmatic approaches so that we will be able to foster united action at this important juncture.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman