



**Opening remarks of Ambassador ICHIKAWA at
the Reception for the UN Programme of Fellowships on Disarmament
6 June 2024**

Dear Fellows, Excellencies and distinguished guests,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to our delegation this evening. Today we are welcoming (25) Fellows of the UN Disarmament Fellowship 2024 programme, joined by colleagues from the Geneva Mission of countries participating in this year's programme, as well as past participants currently based in Geneva. I would like to express my sincere thanks to UNODA for their efforts in organizing this long-standing and valuable programme.

For over a decade, our delegation has been hosting this annual reception to provide disarmament fellows with an opportunity to exchange views with their peers and with more experienced diplomats in the disarmament community based in Geneva.

As the only country that has ever suffered the use of atomic bombs during war, Japan is deeply committed to international efforts for disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament. The tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki must never be repeated. Japan attaches great importance to sharing the experiences of devastation and humanitarian consequences of using nuclear weapons with people of all generations around the world, in particular with the youth.

We believe it is essential for the UN Disarmament Fellows to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki, interact with people affected by the use of nuclear weapons, and understand its humanitarian impact. We hope that your visits to Geneva, to partner countries including Japan, will be fruitful, and will motivate you to remain engaged in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in your career.

I have long recognized the importance of building and strengthening the alumni network of this Fellowship programme. I have met and worked with many former Fellows engaged in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation during my previous postings in Tokyo and Vienna. A number of them told me they had acquired through this programme not only the essential knowledge and invaluable network, but also strong and long-lasting impressions during their visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which had motivated them to continue their career in this field.

This is why we are currently making focused efforts, together with UNODA, to get more comprehensive information on the alumni of this programme and to have more active engagement with them. We are very happy to welcome those of you whom we could find so far here in Geneva. This year's Fellows will certainly benefit from their conversation with more experienced diplomats, including the alumni, in imagining their future career. I hope that our colleagues present today will also receive fresh inspiration and encouragement from the Fellows for our ongoing work and efforts.

Japan will continue to support UNODA to further enhance the Fellowship programme, including in its efforts to establish and expand a structured alumni network.

Thank you all for being with us and I hope you will enjoy this evening.

(End)