

Statement by Ambassador ICHIKAWA Tomiko

Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament

Conference on Disarmament Plenary, 26 March 2024

Thematic discussion on

“Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament”

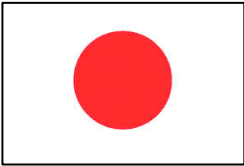
Mr. President,

78 years have passed since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These tragedies must never be repeated. As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in war, Japan will continue to spearhead international efforts in realizing "a world without nuclear weapons." However, the path towards this common goal is becoming more difficult, given serious challenges posed to the international security environment.

Russia's nuclear threats, let alone any use of nuclear weapons in the context of the situation in Ukraine, are absolutely unacceptable.

Historical shifts in power balance are taking place in the Indo-Pacific region, and the security environment around Japan has been becoming more severe. Military buildups, including nuclear weapons and missiles, are rapidly advancing in an opaque manner in the vicinity of Japan. Additionally, there are increasing pressures from attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force in the region.

Moreover, Japan remains seriously concerned about the advancement of the DPRK's nuclear and missile activities, including its repeated ballistic missile launches and escalatory rhetoric on the use of nuclear weapons. Such activities pose a serious challenge to the international community. Japan reiterates its strong commitment to the complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of the DPRK's all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges. Japan urges North Korea to abide by all relevant UN Security Council resolutions and return at an early date to full compliance with the NPT and IAEA safeguards.



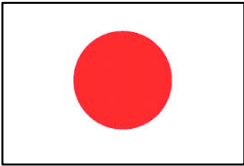
Mr. President,

Against this backdrop, Japan will continue to advance realistic and practical approach to nuclear disarmament in order to maintain and strengthen the NPT, which is the cornerstone for the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and achieve a world without nuclear weapons. Japan has been submitting a resolution on the elimination of nuclear weapons to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly every year since 1994 to present concrete measures under this approach. In this regard, I would like to make the following three points.

First, Japan emphasizes the importance of the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Japan is determined to make every effort to heighten political momentum for commencing the negotiations.

In this context, the UN Security Council held a ministerial briefing on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation under the Japanese Presidency on 18th March to deepen the discussions on measures toward a world without nuclear weapons. In this briefing, Ms. Kamikawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, announced the establishment of the “FMCT Friends.” This is a cross-regional group with the participation of both nuclear weapon-States and non-nuclear weapon States. Its aim is to maintain and enhance political attention to an FMCT and to contribute to expand the support for the negotiation of an FMCT. Together with the members of this group, Japan will actively engage with CD member states to contribute to forging greater momentum toward the commencement of the negotiations.

Pending the entry into force of such a treaty, Japan calls upon all relevant states to declare or maintain moratoriums on fissile material production for the aforementioned purposes.



As mentioned before, UNIDIR is currently implementing a research project on an FMCT, with the cooperation of Japan, in order to summarize and analyze the current status surrounding fissile materials and moratoria, as well as to capture main obstacles to commence negotiations. Under this project, a hybrid seminar will be held on 26th March, from 1:15pm in Room VIII, to which all CD Member States are invited. We hope that this initiative will also provide another opportunity to deepen practical discussions on an FMCT.

Second, Japan remains strongly committed to the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Japan urges all states, particularly the remaining States listed in its Annex 2, to sign and ratify the CTBT, which has not entered into force more than a quarter century. Pending its entry into force, Japan urges all relevant states to declare or maintain existing moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions.

Lastly, I would also like to underline the importance of transparency as the foundation of all nuclear disarmament measures. In the era of heightened tension and diverging positions, enhancing transparency, including on nuclear forces by nuclear-weapon States, will contribute to building confidence and fostering conducive environment for further progress in nuclear disarmament. Japan would like to work with all relevant states to advance concrete measures to enhance transparency, including during the current NPT review cycle.

Mr. President,

Before I conclude, Japan also firmly believes that outer space must remain a domain free of nuclear weapons and that it is our common responsibility to fully comply with the existing legal frameworks, including the Outer Space Treaty. Together with the United States, Japan put forward a draft UN Security Council resolution to this effect.

Thank you, Mr. President.

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