

STATEMENT BY TOSHIO SANO
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 69TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THEMATIC DEBATE: OTHER WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

-- 24 October 2014, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has significantly contributed to peace and security through the destruction of chemical weapons and materials in an effectively verifiable manner.

Japan firmly believes that it is essential to strengthen the efforts for the universality of the Convention, and for that purpose it is important to provide incentives including expertise and technical assistance to encourage states not party to join the Convention. In this regard, the OPCW conducted the mock industry inspection in Myanmar in August this year, which Japan supported and participated in, to share its experiences as a State Party which receives a number of industry inspections on a daily basis. We believe that this will positively contribute to future participation of Myanmar to the CWC.

We praise the continued efforts made by the major chemical weapon possessor states for the destruction of their stockpiles. With the verifiable destruction of more than three quarters of all declared stockpiles of chemical weapons all around the world, the destruction of chemical weapons will still remain the core objective of the Convention pending its completion.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan believes it is important to destroy the Syrian chemical weapons materials and their production facilities as soon as possible. On our part, Japan made contribution of approximately 18 million US dollars to the UN and the OPCW for their destruction effort. We are pleased to note that declared chemical materials have been removed from Syria and the destruction process outside of Syria is now very close to its completion. It is necessary for us to continue to be fully engaged in carrying out the remaining tasks.

With regard to the reports of the use of chemical weapons in Syria, we are gravely concerned about the situation which was disclosed by the Second Report of the fact finding mission. The report concluded that activities in contravention of the CWC have been carried out repeatedly in a systematic way. We condemn the attacks using chemical weapons and cannot overlook such a serious issue. Japan supports the continuation of the work of the fact finding mission in Syria and of the exploration on how to tackle this situation.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan has taken seriously our obligations under the CWC, and is committed to the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons (ACWs) in China with enormous human and financial resources invested. Although ACW destruction projects entail various challenges and uncertainties, they have been making steady progress. We would like to underscore that these unprecedented and extremely challenging projects can only be carried out through close cooperation and coordination with China. In this respect, Japan reaffirms its commitment to continue its fullest possible efforts to bring the projects forward with the cooperation of China.

Mr. Chairman,

Along with the CWC, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) has also played a vital role for international peace and security.

Japan welcomes the useful discussion during the current inter-sessional process as we are now in the important stage of promoting a common understanding for effective action towards the next Review Conference. We will actively participate in various topics under discussion in the BTWC, with a particular focus on responses to the rapid advances in science and technology.

Advanced science and technology in life science has enormous benefits to mankind, but also their dual-use nature increases new biological threats caused by their misuse or illicit use, in particular by non-state actors. Therefore, the universalisation of the BTWC has become more important than ever before to enhance international security. In this regard, Japan welcomes the recent announcement by Myanmar on its upcoming ratification to the Convention. We strongly encourage other states not party to follow suit and accede to the Convention at their earliest opportunity.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.