

(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY TOSHIO SANO
AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 70TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
- THEMATIC DEBATE: NUCLEAR WEAPONS -
21 OCTOBER 2015, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

Unfortunately, the 2015 NPT Review Conference was unable to produce a consensus outcome document which was expected to provide us with concrete guidelines for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation for the review cycle up to the 2020 Review Conference. However, we should neither overestimate nor underestimate the result of the Review Conference. A lack of agreement at this time does not mean we have a shortage of political will among Member States to take a united action towards a world free of nuclear weapons. At the same time, the absence of an agreement means that we lost the sense of direction toward the 2020 Review Conference. We are afraid that the nuclear non-proliferation structure will gradually be unraveled and an overarching security architecture based on the NPT will be wavered. Now we should do whatever we can to strengthen the NPT regime, which has been a linchpin for international peace and security over the past century. What is most important to do is to carry out the Action Plan of 2010 and other measures agreed to in the past Review Conferences in 1995 and 2000.

Mr. Chairman,

Bearing this in mind, we would like to underscore the following points from our national perspectives.

First, although the NPT faces serious challenges, it remains the most universal treaty to secure the world's peace and stability. Therefore, we continue to underline the importance of universality of the treaty and urge non-States Parties to accede to it as non-nuclear weapon states without delay and without conditions to strengthen the NPT regime.

Second, we believe that the Russian and US leadership based upon mutual trust is indispensable for further reduction of nuclear arsenals, and eventual global nuclear stockpile reduction involving other States that possess nuclear weapons. We urge Russia and the US to resume negotiations as soon as possible.

Third, in this vein, we expect that the continuation of dialogue among the five nuclear-weapon States, or "N5 Process," is valid and effective not only for confidence building among them but will also serve as a basis for future multilateral nuclear reduction negotiations among States possessing nuclear weapons. We call upon all nuclear-weapon States to fulfill the obligation of Article VI of the NPT and renew their commitments made in the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

Fourth, Japan encourages the five nuclear-weapon States to take, on a voluntary basis, whichever disarmament measures they can accomplish. Their voluntary actions will definitely be welcomed and contribute to filling the gap of trust and confidence between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States, which is imperative to uphold the NPT regime. Among other things, the continuation of reporting should be underscored.

We look forward to seeing the detailed regular reports by the N5 to the PrepComs, which will provide Member States an opportunity to discuss their reports.

Fifth, the early entry into force of the CTBT and the early commencement of an FMCT remain an imminent issue. The Japanese and Kazakhstan Foreign Ministers co-chaired “the Ninth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT” in New York last month and adopted a final declaration calling for the early entry into force of the CTBT. Japan urges all countries, particularly, the remaining eight Annex II States to ratify the Treaty to overcome internal difficulties and manage to take prompt action. The report adopted by the FMCT GGE is expected to increase momentum for the commencement of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament (CD). Japan requests not only CD Member States, but all UN Member States to seriously consider creative ways to start an FMCT negotiation. Furthermore, until the entry into force of an FMCT, we urge all nuclear-weapon States and states possessing nuclear warheads to seriously consider declaring or continue to maintain a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other explosive devices.

Sixth, Japan commends the UK, Norway and US’ initiative on the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV). Especially, Japan regards the US initiative as an important platform where both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States can work together to deepen their understanding about the complex challenges involved in verification of the entire life cycle of nuclear weapons. It is also valuable that this initiative will bring them together under a cooperative framework with the aim of developing and eventually applying new technologies and concepts to address these challenges.

Mr. Chairman,

Seventh, resolving regional nuclear proliferation issues through diplomatic dialogue is vital. We welcome the two agreements, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action between EU3+3 and Iran as well as the “Roadmap” between the IAEA and Iran. In this regard, the DPRK’s on-going nuclear and missile development programme is of grave concern to the whole international community. Japan strongly urges the DPRK to refrain from provocations, abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, and immediately cease all related activities. Japan also urges the DPRK to return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards and credible and meaningful dialogue towards denuclearization.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly, against the backdrop of an increasingly severe security environment our country faces, we reaffirm the necessity to continue to employ an appropriate national security policy including nuclear deterrence. At the same time, the issue of humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in view of the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons has become the political movement. As the only country that has suffered from atomic bombings, Japan has always emphasized the importance of raising awareness of humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. The humanitarian issue should underpin all approaches and efforts of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and play not a dividing but a bridging role to unite the entire international community. It should be inclusive and serve as a catalyst for a united global action towards a world free of nuclear weapons.

In conclusion, the cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States is indispensable to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear weapon States must do their part on non-proliferation obligations and nuclear-weapon States must do their part on disarmament obligations. Japan is ready to work together with all States in this regard.

Thank you.