



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. TOSHIO SANO
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH 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 Ibrahim Dabbashi, on your assumption of the Chairmanship to this important First Committee. I assure you of my Delegation's full support and cooperation to you. Last month, I was newly appointed as the Japanese Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva. It is my great pleasure to come back to the disarmament community. I look forward to closely working with you and all other colleagues to carry out meaningful tasks.

Mr. Chairman,

The overall objective of disarmament is to achieve a safer world with fewer weapons and I believe we can advance disarmament without hindering any State's national security. Although disarmament is not an easy task that can be achieved overnight, the time is now to combine our efforts for making progress in disarmament due to the following reasons: First, under the current financial difficulties worldwide, disarmament merits fresh attention to ease budgetary constraints for all States. Second, since disarmament itself is useful as confidence and security building measures, it would bring us to a higher state of mutual confidence. Third, upholding the aspiration towards disarmament will allow every State to stand on high moral ground.

To advance disarmament as such, it will be of utmost importance to

generate political will. To this end, I believe that strong political will was demonstrated by our leaders last month during the High-Level meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament (HLM).

Both the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Japan participated in the meeting to demonstrate their firm political will for disarmament. In the same week, the Non-proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) to which my country is a member, held its Foreign Minister's meeting in New York and amplified its commitment together with two new member States, Nigeria and the Philippines, which were wholeheartedly welcomed.

We regret and share in the wide range frustration surrounding the long stalemate in the CD. Such disappointment can be understood as a cause to the several initiatives outside the CD, such as the establishment of the Open-ended Working Group to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations (OEWG), the Governmental Group of Experts on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (GGE on an FMCT), and the HLM. Since Japan values the distinguished characteristics which color the CD as a sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body, we will carry out our best efforts to push it forward as we assume the third Presidency in 2014. In this respect, I would like to stress as my Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated in the HLM, that the time has come for both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states to overcome their differences and unite in their efforts as a whole to achieve the total elimination of nuclear weapons. This is fundamental and I cannot imagine the CD moving forward without such an approach.

While working on CD's impasse, we also need to keep up our efforts in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone in disarmament and non-proliferation. Building upon substantive discussions done in the first and second session of the Preparatory Committee, we must consolidate our deliberations into a recommendation in the third session. We hope for constructive contribution from every State. Japan also looks forward with high expectations to the report from the five nuclear-weapon states on their nuclear disarmament efforts at the same session and urges them to continue their efforts in the run-up to 2014.

Mr. Chairman,

Based on our historical background, the people of Japan sincerely hope for and support the achievement of a world free of nuclear weapons. At the same time, I would also like to stress that disarmament should take into account, through a sufficiently practical approach, the impending risks that the international community faces. This is one point that my Foreign Minister, Fumio Kishida expressed in his statement at the HLM. In this respect, Japan will once again submit to this committee its resolution entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". We strongly hope that our resolution gains as many co-sponsors and supporters as possible. Japan also looks forward to the upcoming discussion to be held in the GGE on an FMCT which will commence its work next year. It will not only contribute to realizing this indispensable building block on the path to a world without nuclear weapons, but also give further impetus in the field of multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

The DPRK's nuclear and missile development programs, including its work in uranium enrichment, are serious violations of the relevant Security Council resolutions. A nuclear test by DPRK is totally unacceptable, as it represents a grave challenge to the international non-proliferation regime centered on the NPT, and seriously undermines the peace and security of Northeast Asia as well as the international community as a whole. Furthermore, in April this year, the DPRK announced that it would readjust and restart its Yongbyon nuclear facilities. If the DPRK takes such actions, it will be another violation of the agreements under the Six-Party Talks and relevant Security Council resolutions. We risk the reversal of our efforts taken in favor of a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan urges the DPRK to comply fully with all its international obligations and commitments, including the Security Council resolutions and the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six Party Talks. We once more strongly urge the DPRK to completely abandon all its nuclear weapons and missile development programs in a verifiable and irreversible manner.

The Iranian nuclear issue is also a serious concern to the whole international community. Japan urges Iran to comply with the demands of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors. We also call upon Iran to take substantive actions for the peaceful resolution of the issue. Japan expresses its expectation for meaningful negotiations with the EU3+3 and with the IAEA, hoping that the negotiations will soon lead to concrete results.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan expressed its deep concern from the recent use of chemical weapons in Syria, which wounded many and caused a considerable death toll, which included innocent women and children. The use of chemical weapons is not permissible under any circumstances. To this end, we welcome the unanimous adoption of the Security Council resolution 2118 which reinforced the decision of the OPCW (Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons) as a basis for concrete steps to eliminate such inhumane weapons. Japan strongly urges the Government of Syria to comply faithfully and fully with the chemical weapons elimination program set forth in the decision of the Executive Council of OPCW and the Security Council resolution. We will also continue to support the efforts by relevant countries and organizations so that chemical weapons will never be used again.

Mr. Chairman,

With respect to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), it is important to implement the report of the Third Review Conference in order to adapt to the changing international security environment. Japan has played a constructive role to achieve the objectives of the CWC. In addition to that, Japan has committed to making fullest possible efforts to complete the destruction of abandoned chemical weapons in China and has achieved significant progress.

As for the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, Japan

welcomes the successful convening of the Meeting of Experts held in June in Geneva under the effective leadership of Chair, Madame Judit Körömi. As a member of the JACKSNNZ group, we will continue our efforts to strengthen the implementation of the convention while considering developments in science and technology as well as dual-use issues.

Mr. Chairman,

The adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty at the General Assembly on the 2nd of April was undoubtedly an epoch-making success in the history of arms control. Now, it is time to consolidate our efforts in bringing the Treaty into force as soon as possible and begin implementing the provisions in order to achieve our goal, which is to reduce human suffering, among others. Japan is determined to continue its active role towards an early entry into force of the Treaty, the establishment of an effective Secretariat, and above all, promoting international efforts to better regulate the global arms trade and combat the illicit transfer of conventional weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally, I would like to conclude my statement by stressing that Japan has for a long time worked in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation education to raise awareness about the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons. Based on our historical experience, we always bear in mind the humanitarian aspect of disarmament. Since this is a universal issue to every member of this community, we hope that this matter will be conducted in an inclusive and universal manner and open to any States to follow. We believe that such discussions will become a point of departure and Japan will redouble its efforts in raising the awareness of this issue.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.