



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. TOSHIO SANO
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HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 68TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- THEMATIC DEBATE: DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION EDUCATION -
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Mr. Chairman,

A world without nuclear weapons is a common goal for the international community, and thus we must all share the responsibility to advance global disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. To this end, it is essential to raise awareness among the public of the threats posed by nuclear arsenals and the tragic humanitarian consequences of their use, as well as the way of overcoming these challenges caused by such weapons. Such efforts also contribute to securing the disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Mr. Chairman,

As a country to have suffered from atomic bombings, Japan has historic mission to inform people around the world, particularly future generations, with knowledge of the catastrophic consequences caused by nuclear weapons. In this regard, Japan started a program called “Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons” in 2010. Many of the Special Communicators, who are atomic bomb survivors (Hibakusha), have been travelling the world, passing on their first-hand experiences. In view of the fact that average age of most survivors is over 78 years old, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida launched a new program called “Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons” in June this year. Under this

program, a younger generation is expected to share what they have learned about the tragic consequences caused by nuclear weapons and their thoughts about possible steps to achieve their elimination. We have high hopes for what they can accomplish through this program. Japan has also undertaken efforts to make the testimonies of the Hibakusha more widely available. Testimonies have been translated into English and other languages can be accessed on the website of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

As for the professionals, every year since 1983, Japan has been inviting young diplomats and government officials to Japan through the UN Disarmament Fellowship Program. Eight hundred and eleven fellows from various countries have so far traveled to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This year 25 fellows visited both cities to learn about the realities from the use of nuclear weapons. We hope it was an eye-opening experience for them.

Furthermore, Japan, cooperating with the UN Secretariat, established a permanent exhibition on the atomic bombings in New York in 1983 and in Geneva in 2011 in the premises of the UN. These exhibitions have contributed to a greater public awareness of the consequences caused by nuclear weapons. Japan hopes that many people who visit these exhibitions will not only learn about the tragedy caused by nuclear bombings, but also share the need for further disarmament and non-proliferation efforts as well as call for an initiative towards a world free of nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, the exhibition in New York was relocated to a smaller space when the current reconstruction of the UN building started. The number of exhibited articles is greatly reduced and few people notice the existence of the exhibition. Japan requests the UN Secretariat to allocate greater space than before and to further improve the quality of the exhibition when the reconstruction will be completed next year.

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education is recognized not only by Japan, but also the vast majority of the international community. For the first time, the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference underscored education as a useful and effective means to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. In its Action Plan, all states are encouraged to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on "The United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education". In particular, I would like to draw attention to Recommendation 31 of the report, which encourages Member States to

inform the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs of steps taken to implement the recommendations. Unfortunately, according to the 5th biennial report of the Secretary-General on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education (A/67/138), only nine countries, including Japan, submitted the relevant information. This is a disappointing result and should be improved. We encourage all the Member States to put into practice the Secretary-General's recommendations and report to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs.

The Secretary General's recommendations also call for various educational and disseminating efforts to be carried out not only by governments, but also together with non-governmental organizations. In this regard, the Japanese government held with the UN "The Global Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education" in the city of Nagasaki. The forum brought educators, diplomats, researchers, and members of civil society to share experiences, compile best practices, and develop partnerships to advance disarmament and non-proliferation education. The Forum issued "The 2012 Nagasaki Declaration", which expressed the firm commitment of participants to further promote efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation education and proposed various measures to be taken. We will continue to cooperate and collaborate with civil society in order to develop concrete measures and to make positive contributions to disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to conclude my statement by stressing that achieving a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons cannot be realized without firm support of people worldwide. Believing in the potential of education, Japan intends to continue to take the lead in this area and calls on all Member States to join.

Thank you.