

Statement by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan  
at the Opening Session  
High-Level Meeting of the General Assembly on Nuclear Disarmament  
26 September 2013, New York

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Representatives,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to begin by expressing my sincere congratulations to His Excellency Ambassador John William Ashe on his assumption of the Presidency of the Sixty-Eighth Session of the United Nations General Assembly. I also would like to take this opportunity to convey my profound gratitude to His Excellency Ambassador Vuk Jeremić as President of the Sixty-Seventh Session and to those who contributed to the successful convening of this esteemed meeting. Indeed, this is the first High-Level meeting focused on nuclear disarmament within the United Nations General Assembly, and I am highly honored to be given an opportunity to address all of you during this Opening Session.

Mr. President,

Japan is the only country which has ever suffered from the devastation caused by the use of atomic bombs in wartime. We know from experience the aftermath caused by the use of nuclear weapons and their elimination has been Japanese people's unwavering aspiration since the end of World War II. For my part, I participated in the commemorative peace ceremonies held this August in Hiroshima and Nagasaki where I renewed my strong determination to achieve "a world free of nuclear weapons".

Mr. President,

"A world free of nuclear weapons" is a major goal not only of Japan but shared by mankind. At the same time, however, in reality a massive number of nuclear weapons still remain and in some areas nuclear arsenals are supposedly increasing with a lack of transparency. Considering nuclear terrorism by non-state actors and the nuclear development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), the nuclear risk we face is more diverse and challenging than what we encountered in the Cold War Era.