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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. AKIO SUDA
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HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 65TH SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THEMATIC DEBATE: NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

This year the people of Japan commemorated the 65th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We were honored to have in attendance, for the first time, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ban Ki-Moon, at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony. On the day before he paid a visit to Nagasaki as well. Japan, as the only country to have suffered atomic bombings, believes in its special role in the international efforts towards realizing a world without nuclear weapons.

Bearing this in mind, Japan took a new initiative last month, jointly with Australia, to convene a Foreign Ministerial meeting on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Ten participating like-minded countries adopted the Joint Statement, expressing our resolve to take forward the
consensus outcomes of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and to work on concrete measures to pursue "a world of decreased nuclear risks" on the path toward "a world without nuclear weapons." This collective effort will always be open and inclusive, and Japan hopes that this initiative, in cooperation with other countries, will contribute to further advancing our joint endeavor toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

During the present session of the General Assembly, Japan, together with many co-sponsor members, submitted a revised resolution on nuclear disarmament, newly entitled "United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons." This resolution puts emphasis on concrete and practical united-actions to be taken by the international community towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We need to maintain and strengthen the current momentum and move forward. My delegation strongly hopes that more states than ever before would extend their support to this resolution on united-actions.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan welcomes the successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. The Conference faced difficulties on many issues, but in the end the states parties demonstrated flexibility and wisdom to reach consensus on a final document that contained an action plan covering all three pillars of the Treaty. It was particularly important that we had the reconfirmation of the "unequivocal undertaking" by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals. A commitment was also made to undertake further efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed. Further, the principle of transparency was clearly established together with the principles of
irreversibility and verifiability in the implementation of the Treaty. Agreement on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East was also an important accomplishment.

Action 5 of the Final Document requests the nuclear-weapon States to report on progress regarding their agreed disarmament undertakings to the PrepCom in 2014. In this regard, Japan welcomes, as an encouraging sign, the decision of the P5 states to convene, in Paris in 2011, the first follow-up meeting of the 2010 Review Conference and hopes that tangible outcome will be shaped through this P5 process.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan welcomed the signing of the New START Treaty by the two largest nuclear weapon States in April this year. We earnestly hope that Russia and the U.S. ratify this critical treaty as soon as possible and encourage them to start discussions on a follow-on treaty.

Pending the fulfillment by the nuclear-weapon States of their disarmament obligations, the non-member states of the NPT should not remain inactive. Japan calls on those states to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions. While we await this, we urge those states possessing nuclear weapons immediately to stop increasing and start reducing their arsenals.

We call on the nuclear-weapon States for further efforts in the reduction of the number and the role of nuclear weapons. At the same time, we call upon them to take measures to further
reduce the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch of nuclear weapons and to ensure their nuclear weapons are kept at the lowest alert level possible in ways that promote international stability and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Halting the further production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes is a top priority. In achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, the first step we must take is the cessation of the manufacture of nuclear weapons. A fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) is thus the most concrete and urgent step before us that will contribute to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. An FMCT has been on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament for more than 10 years and has been a major global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issue for more than 40 years. This historical fact means that we have not made a single concrete progress in multilateral sphere on nuclear disarmament over decades, while general arguments on the necessity and the design to achieve the total elimination are flourishing at public as well as political level all over the world. I should ask, if we cannot clear even this urgent and practical step of FMCT in short, how can we make a stride towards the total elimination?

It was therefore extremely regrettable that the CD still remains paralyzed due to the continued misuse of the consensus rule, despite having reached agreement by consensus in May last year. Deeply concerned with this situation, on 24 September the Secretary-General of the United Nations convened a high-level meeting here in New York to revitalize the CD. My government highly appreciates his efforts. It will be unacceptable to us that the CD continues to be inactive over next year’s session. In the situation where there is no firm prospect emerging
within the CD of launching FMCT negotiations, we must consider alternatives. Next year will be crucial for the Conference and Japan appeals to all its member states to show constructive flexibility for building consensus on starting substantive work on the core issues.

Mr. Chairman,

As stated in Action 13 of the NPT Final Document, all states that have ratified the CTBT are resolved to promote the entry into force and implementation of the treaty at the national, regional and global level, and we call on all states to follow through on this action. Over the years, Japan has been an ardent supporter of cooperative initiatives to achieve the entry into force of the treaty. For instance, Japan invited representatives from Egypt and Indonesia to our International Monitoring System facilities to help their understanding of the treaty and its ratification process. It was thus more than welcome to hear that Indonesia, which is one of the remaining nine Annex 2 countries, was in the process of ratifying the CTBT in the near future.

Mr. Chairman,

The advancement in nuclear disarmament and the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing. The most effective way to strengthen the non-proliferation regime is through enhanced and more effective IAEA safeguards. Japan urges all states that have yet to conclude and bring into force a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol to do so as soon as possible as encouraged by the 2010 NPT Review Conference in May as well as by the IAEA General Conference in September.
As I mentioned in my general statement, the international community must remain engaged in the nuclear issue related to the DPRK and Iran. The nuclear development program of the DPRK poses a grave threat to the peace and security of East Asia and the international community, as well as a serious challenge to the NPT regime. Japan urges the DPRK to take concrete actions in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council and IAEA resolutions and to fulfill its commitments, including those in the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. Japan reiterates its serious concern about the proliferation risks posed by Iran’s nuclear program and underscores the importance of Iran’s full and immediate compliance with its international obligations.

Mr. Chairman,

In our journey towards the total elimination, it is imperative that we see the role of nuclear weapons to be reduced in security strategy and we continue to pursue “a world of decreased nuclear risks.” On top of that, I would say to those who possess or try to acquire nuclear weapons that possessing nuclear weapons, per se, does not mean any political advantage in the international politics. I would like to conclude, in this context, by quoting what the Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon said in his remarks at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony on 6 August this year: “Status and prestige belong not to those who possess nuclear weapons, but to those who reject them.”

Thank you Mr. Chairman.