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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: DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION
EDUCATION

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Mr. Chairman,

In May this year, the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for the first time underscored the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education as a useful and effective means to advance the goals of the NPT in support of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. In its “Action Plan” the Review Conference also encouraged all States to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations (A/57/124) regarding the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education.

Japan welcomes this outcome of the Review Conference and emphasizes once again the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education. In particular, I would like to take this opportunity to draw attention to Recommendation 31 of the report, which encourages the Member States to inform the Department for Disarmament Affairs, now the Office for Disarmament Affairs, of steps taken to implement the Secretary-General’s recommendations. Unfortunately, according to the Secretary-General’s recent report
reviewing the implementation of these recommendations, only five countries, including Japan, submitted the relevant information this year. This is a disappointing result and one we can improve on. My delegation therefore encourages all the Member States to put into action the Secretary-General's recommendations and report to the UN Office of Disarmament Affairs on the steps they have taken.

Mr. Chairman,
During the current session of the General Assembly, Japan is putting forward a new resolution on nuclear disarmament entitled 'United actions toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.' United actions should also be employed in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education. Civil society plays a vital role in raising public awareness, mobilizing opinion, creating innovative ideas and tools, as well as providing various inputs to government officials. As a part of these activities, Japan, as the only country which has ever suffered atomic bombings, continues to actively support its atomic bomb survivors, the Hibakusha, to share their stories with the people of the world. With this objective, the Government of Japan has started to appoint Hibakusha as "Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons" asking them to pass on their first-hand experiences of the tragic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons to the world, as well as to the young generations.

I am pleased to tell you that the first those special communicators gave testimonies to young diplomats and government officials from various countries, who visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki under UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme last month.

In a joint working paper that we submitted together with the United Nations University to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, it was proposed that dialogue be initiated on disarmament and non-proliferation education among governments and civil society. In an effort to realize this proposal, the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues, which was held in Saitama, Japan in August this year, provided the chance for such dialogue. Leading NGOs, academics, diplomats, educators and students took part and presented their ideas for promoting education in the disarmament context.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to announce that Japan and the United Nations University will host a global forum on disarmament and non-proliferation education toward
March 2011, as proposed in our joint working paper. The main purpose of this forum is to facilitate further dialogue and cooperation among civil society and governments on the subject.

Mr. Chairman,

The world without nuclear weapons would not come true in short. It will be a long journey which requires enduring will and enormous energy of the people and leaders of the world. Therefore, it is all the more crucial whether we could or could not root broader and deeper understanding of the importance of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in the mind of people. That is why we need to put so much emphasis on education and public awareness in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you