Open-Ended Working Group on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations
23, February 2016
Statement by Ambassador Toshio SANO,
Permanent Representative of JAPAN to the Conference on Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

As a sole country devastated by nuclear bombings during war, we have a strong desire for achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. My government, like Germany, takes broad effective measures. The Government of Japan has been an advocate of the “Building Block” approach for nuclear disarmament. This is a realistic way to achieve global zero. From this viewpoint, I’d like to make a couple of points regarding two guiding questions put forward by the Chair.

First, to attain real progress in nuclear disarmament, it is essential to ensure the united actions of the entire community, including the NWS. Without participation of the NWS, the effectiveness of the implementation for a nuclear disarmament agreement would be questionable.

Second, we regard the EIF of the CTBT and the commencement of an FMCT negotiation as urgent and important effective measures for nuclear disarmament. The significance of the CTBT is even more important than before due to the tense security situation in East Asia where nuclear testing was conducted early this year. Regarding the FMCT, in several occasions, including CD sessions, we have made efforts for deepening the understanding of the structure of the treaty and successfully identified future tasks. The importance of these two instruments remains unchanged.

Third, some have proposed the immediate start of negotiations for a legal prohibition of nuclear weapons or a Treaty. But looking over the present security situation, we are not yet at the stage in which we are ready to take united actions, as well as NWS, to start negotiation of such a legal instrument.

Fourth, with respect to a NWC, it will be necessary to give further thought, with a longer perspective, to how a multilateral nuclear disarmament framework or a NWC, would look like as the final “Building Block.” Our position on a NWC remains
unchanged. In fact, much prior work needs to be done to get the final “Building Block.” For the record, let me reiterate several effective measures. I hope they will be in the recommendations;
(a) Increase in transparency of nuclear arsenals;
(b) Declaration of moratorium of nuclear testing by all nuclear possessing states;
(c) Declaration of moratorium of fissile material production by all nuclear possessing states;
(d) Entry into force of the CTBT;
(e) Commencement of negotiation of FMCT;
(f) Commencement of a post-new-START by US and Russia;
(g) Resolving regional nuclear issues which hamper global nuclear disarmament efforts;
(h) Establishment of reliable and international verification mechanism.

Building Blocks which aim at achieving global zero are not limited to these measures.

In particular, we need to combine our efforts for reducing not only the number of nuclear weapons but also reducing the role of and motivation for possessing nuclear weapons.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.