STATEMENT BY MR. HIROYUKI YAMAMOTO
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TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP TO DEVELOP PROPOSALS TO TAKE FORWARD
MULTILATERAL NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT NEGOTIATIONS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT
AND MAINTENANCE OF A WORLD WITHOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS

Geneva, 15 May 2013
Mr. Chairman,

Since this is the first time to take the floor, I congratulate you, Ambassador Manuel DENGU, on your election as the Chairman of this Open-ended Working Group (OEWG). I assure you of my delegation’s utmost cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

We all aim to achieve a peaceful and secure world without nuclear weapons. Japan believes that it can be achieved not only through unilateral or bilateral initiatives from nuclear weapon holding states, but also through multilateral nuclear disarmament process. From this point of view, it is important that the OEWG will aim for developing proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations in order to overcome the longtime impasse in the existing disarmament fora such as the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Chairman,

Having experienced the atomic bombing in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, people of Japan strongly desire the total elimination of nuclear weapons more than anyone else in the world. At the same time, however, we do face the reality that several nuclear weapon states deter each other in our region. As a result, Japan secures itself by a fine balance of the nuclear deterrence and thus believes that the goal of “a world without nuclear weapons” should be achieved through steady accumulation of practical nuclear disarmament measures as well as confidence building measures. Therefore, we call for such practical steps as the universalization of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), and the entering into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

Moreover, there are other practical measures we can take in parallel. The Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), in which Japan is a member, suggests a number of proposals for states possessing nuclear
weapons such as reducing the role of nuclear weapons, increasing transparency and reducing non-strategic nuclear weapons. Last but not least, we would like to stress the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation education to raise awareness and to broaden understanding of ordinary people regarding the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons. We believe this is an issue worthy of discussion.

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding my intervention, I would like to reiterate and to remind everyone that all states and organizations present in this room share the common goal of a world without nuclear weapons, although they may have different views on how to reach there. I hope that the OEWG will bring up with constructive proposals to draw us closer to our common goal. Japan looks forward to participating in active discussions.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.