

(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. SUMIO TARUI
AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE
FOR THE 2010 REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES TO THE TREATY
ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS (NPT)

- DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION EDUCATION -

Geneva, 30 April 2008

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

At last year's first session of the Preparatory Committee to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Japan submitted its own working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education, in addition to delivering a joint-statement in collaboration with eight countries. In the wake of the first PrepCom, there has been much debate on how to create an international environment conducive to the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as well as how to maintain a world free from such weapons after their total elimination. Japan believes that promoting disarmament and non-proliferation education is one answer to these questions. Based on this understanding, Japan intends to continue to focus its efforts in this area.

Japan has submitted to the current Preparatory Committee a working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education. As we mention in this paper, there are at least two significant points related to disarmament and non-proliferation education within the context of the NPT. Firstly, the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation education can lead to and should lead to broader awareness among the public on the significant role the NPT is playing in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular, the difficult challenges the NPT regime faces, as well as the benefits of the NPT to international peace and security. Next, in order to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime, the knowledge and experience of the immense destructive power of nuclear weapons, as well as the injury and death they cause, must be passed from generation to generation. Disarmament and non-proliferation education has an important role to play in this aspect.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan places importance on cooperation with the United Nations for disarmament and non-proliferation education. For example, as part of the UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme, the Government of Japan has been inviting junior diplomats and others, who will be playing significant roles in disarmament policy in the future, to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki. To date, more than 650 people have participated in these visits.

Japan also sponsors a UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in a different Japanese city every year. In last year's Conference, the Government of Japan organized as a side-event a "Student Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education" with the participation of local university students. During this student forum, we introduced a discussion format in which the students participated in active debate. The student forum was an excellent chance

to engage in a free and lively exchange of opinions from a range of different perspectives, to cultivate critical thinking amongst the younger generation, as well as to raise awareness and understanding about disarmament.

Furthermore, Japan values the role of civil society in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. For instance, in March this year, we held the “6th Public Forum concerning United Nations Reform”, jointly with NGOs. In this Forum, one of the discussion groups dealt with the issue of how to best promote disarmament and non-proliferation education hereafter.

Mr. Chairman,

As the “UN Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education” mentions, there are teaching methods which utilize numerous forms of media. In our statement to last year’s First PrepCom, we noted that in promoting disarmament education, Japan places particular importance on passing down the knowledge of and determination for disarmament to younger generations. Considering that employing tools the younger generation and ordinary citizens can easily adopt is an effective way of promoting understanding on these issues, Japan has been working to spread knowledge through its pop-culture by utilizing animation, “*manga*” and other forms of media. For example, at the First PrepCom, we displayed computer-generated images of the atomic bombings, as well as distributed copies of *manga*.

In 2002, the Government of Japan published for the first time a White Paper entitled “Japan’s Disarmament Policy”, in order to communicate to its citizens in plain language the current state of Japan’s diplomacy in these fields, as well as to raise awareness of the issues and promote understanding. In April this year, we published the fourth edition of the White Paper, “Japan’s Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy”. Furthermore, to catch the attention of a greater number of people, in addition to publishing our White Paper in English, we also post a copy in both English and Japanese on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Mr. Chairman,

For efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation in the NPT context it is important, in addition to deepening discussions among experts on the security benefits and challenges to the NPT regime, to reinforce the public’s knowledge and cultivate their ability to learn how to think. We intend to continue our efforts in this area, such as our support for holding the UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in Japan, hosting the student debate forum and other initiatives.

Additionally, in terms of sharing knowledge on nuclear weapons, the *Hibakusha* (A-bomb survivors) have been working hard to pass down to the next generation the experience of the atomic bombings through their testimonies. The average age, however, of the surviving *Hibakusha* has now reached 74, and the question of how to hand down those experiences is a major future challenge. At last year's First Committee of the UN General Assembly, the Steven Okazaki documentary "White Light/Black Rain" was screened. Films, such as this one, and other media may be one of effective ways to address this challenge.

In awareness of this kind of problem, the Government of Japan, in collaboration with UNIDIR, held a side-event during lunchtime today on the theme of how to share the experience and knowledge of the effects and destructive power of nuclear weapons, as well as what are effective means for utilizing education practically. In my view, meaningful and useful ideas were exchanged at this event.

Finally, Japan hopes that these efforts outlined in our statement today may serve as a reference for other countries and lead to the further promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education in the international community.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

