



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 223-4300 · www.un.int/japan/

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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. SUMIO TARUI
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 62ND SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
THEMATIC DEBATE: DISARMAMENT AND NON-PROLIFERATION
EDUCATION

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Mr. Chairman,

As it is well known, Japan, being one of the members of the 2002 UN Study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, places great importance on this issue. Bearing in mind that paragraph 33 of the UN Secretary General's report encourages Member States to include in their remarks to the First Committee information on the results of the implementation of the recommendations in this study, today I would like to highlight some of our prominent activities that we have been engaged in to date.

Under the UN Disarmament Fellowship Program, the Government of Japan has been inviting 25 to 30 young diplomats to Japan each year since 1983. The objective of this initiative is to provide promising diplomats from around the world with a briefing on Japan's disarmament and non-proliferation policy and tours of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the commencement of this initiative and in that period we have hosted over 650 diplomats. We consider the visits to Japan by the UN Disarmament Fellows as an extremely meaningful way to offer insight into the reality of atomic weapons.

Every year since 1989, the Government of Japan has co-sponsored with the United Nations a UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in a different city in Japan. This Conference provides a valuable opportunity for distinguished disarmament experts from around the world to engage in useful discussions and exchange ideas. This year the Conference took place in Sapporo from August 27 to 29 under the theme, "New Vision and Required Leadership towards a World free from Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction". The focus of discussions was on multinational efforts for nuclear disarmament, addressing challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime, strengthening the NPT, regional proliferation risks, and nuclear terrorism. This Conference also provides Japanese citizens with an excellent opportunity to learn about disarmament.

Based on the recommendations of the United Nations study, since 2002 the Government of Japan has been inviting prominent educators on disarmament and non-proliferation to Japan. In March this year Japan hosted Dr. Owen Greene, Director, the Centre for International Cooperation and Security at Bradford University, who delivered a public lecture on small arms and light weapons. It is hoped that intellectuals and citizens in Japan will further deepen their understanding on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation through these lectures sessions.

Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the ongoing efforts I have just mentioned, during the first Preparatory Committee to the 2010 NPT Review Conference, convened in Vienna from April to May this year, the Government of Japan announced its decision to launch "New Initiatives on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education". These new initiatives are focused on disseminating knowledge among the younger generation and encouraging their greater participation in disarmament activities, since it will be they who will continue and build on our efforts.

First of the new initiatives is the "Student debating cup on disarmament and non-proliferation". Developing critical thinking abilities in the young is just as important as teaching them the dangers of weapons of mass destruction. From this perspective, the Government of Japan intends to invite students from several countries, including nuclear-weapon States, to debate with Japanese university students on disarmament issues. In this connection, as a follow-up to the UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in Sapporo, on 29 August we held a forum on disarmament and non-proliferation issues for local university students. This is the first time that we have run a forum such as this, and even though the students have had limited opportunities to touch upon these issues, they engaged in a free and lively exchange of opinions, which was beneficial for increasing their interest and knowledge of disarmament.

Second is the use of manga comics and animation, which are parts of Japanese pop culture. Japan believes employing tools that are familiar to young people is an effective means of promoting understanding of disarmament and non-proliferation. During the NPT Preparatory Committee this year, the delegation of Japan distributed English copies of the manga and showed a film of computer-generated re-creation of city streetscapes before the atomic blasts both of which portrayed the devastating effect of atomic bombings.

Lastly, allow me to conclude by saying that the Government of Japan will continue to make its positive contribution to the ongoing efforts at the national, regional and international levels for the promotion of disarmament and non-

proliferation education. Raising awareness is an important part of these efforts and as civil society is often at the forefront of these activities, we will continue to cooperate with civil society groups in this area to develop concrete measures for the implementation of the UN study recommendations. In this vein, we would like to welcome the launching of disarmament section in the UN Cyberschoolbus. This project has immense potential as an educational tool for many children and young people across the globe and we highly commend the work of the people who created this web portal.

Thank you.