Statement by Ambassador Mitsuru Kitano

Director-General of the Disarmament, Non-Proliferation and Science Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Conference on Disarmament

5 February 2013, Geneva

Mr. President,
Distinguished representatives,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to be granted this opportunity to address the Conference on Disarmament (CD). With the benefit of this valuable occasion, I would like to take the time to briefly elaborate the Government of Japan's thoughts on the CD.

Mr. President,

At the end of last year, a new government came to power in Japan and Mr. Fumio Kishida was appointed as our new Foreign Minister. Despite this change, the high priority placed on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in our foreign policy remains steadfastly the same. Foreign Minister Kishida noted in his first speech that the new government will continue to engage actively in these fields.

With our historical background, Japan has placed importance and attachment to nuclear disarmament. We care about progress in this area. Multilateral consultations should produce tangible results to come closer to a world without nuclear weapons.

It is for this reason that we continue to find value in the CD, since it is deemed to be the sole multilateral disarmament negotiating body of the international community.
At the same time, it truly saddens me that the CD has remained ineffective for so long. I was involved in Japan’s ratification process of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It was in 1997, or sixteen years ago. Here, in attending this conference with you, I can’t but reflect upon why we have not achieved anything in this body since then. Given the high expectations placed on the CD and the large resources poured into this forum, the international community is impatient for an outcome.

I welcome, therefore, the efforts of you, Mr. President, and the other CD member states dedicated to seeking agreement on a program of work that will pull the CD out of its years of deadlock. Although every item on the CD’s agenda is important, Japan attaches its highest priority on an FMCT, which in our view should be the next step in the process of nuclear disarmament. In this context, we support your idea, Mr. President, and request every delegation to show its utmost flexibility. We need to move ahead before the member states shift away from the CD.

Mr. President,

Although the CD is the best venue to negotiate multilateral instruments, we do not need to limit our endeavors to advance nuclear disarmament to just this body. Last year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to set up a group of governmental experts (GGE) on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty. The GGE should produce tangible outcomes and give added value to past discussions. With our considerable experience in the field of nuclear energy, Japan is ready to contribute to the GGE. In addition, an open-ended working group is also planned to be held in Geneva. Japan hopes the participants undertake constructive discussions that will develop proposals to take forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations.

Mr. President,

Please allow me to touch upon the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime. Japan places great emphasis on maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime as a key multilateral instrument in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Second Session of the Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) will be held here in Geneva from 22 April. In this connection, Japan is working closely with its partners in the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) to put forward specific and practical proposals for the steady implementation of the 2010 NPT action plan.
The NPDI's activities are not limited to merely advocacy – we are an action-oriented group.

In this regard, we are going to submit to the Second PrepCom, with our partner countries, six joint working papers on non-strategic nuclear weapons, the reduction of the role of nuclear weapons, the CTBT, export controls, nuclear-weapon-free zones, and the wider application of safeguards in nuclear-weapon states. We trust they will bring new ideas and fresh impetus to the NPT review process.

Before the Second PrepCom, the NPDI ministers will meet in The Hague to express our political will for the steady implementation of the 2010 NPT action plan and also to put forward concrete proposals to that end. Moreover, Japan has the honor to host a ministerial meeting in Hiroshima before the Third PrepCom next year.

Finally, Mr. President,

Japan sincerely hopes that the CD will revitalize its work and once again fulfill its mandated role. We must not only enjoy the privilege of this august body, but fulfill our collective responsibility. I would like to stress that Japan stands ready to work with you, Mr. President, and all other states to achieve that end.

I thank you, Mr. President.