STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR MARI AMANO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

THE 1294TH PLENARY MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
GENEVA, 6 AUGUST 2013

Thank you, Mr. President,

Since this is the first time that I take the floor under your Presidency, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption as the President of the Conference on Disarmament. I assure you of my Delegation’s utmost cooperation throughout your tenure. I asked for the floor because of the significance of today. Due to the tragic events which occurred 68 years ago, a Peace Memorial Ceremony was held this morning in Hiroshima and a memorial in Nagasaki will take place Thursday. I ask for the floor to speak a few words regarding this moment in history.

Mr. President,

The desire of the Japanese people to totally eliminate nuclear weapons has been unremitting since 1945. I believe this is the same goal that the whole international community shares, including all of us in this Council Chamber. Although the number of nuclear weapons is decreasing, Japan is not satisfied with this amount, especially since we are aware of the devastation that can be caused from a single atomic explosion.

On the occasion of a round table in Hiroshima last week, Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida stated (I quote), “As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings, it is our country’s mission to pass down the story of the tremendous sufferings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki across borders and generations. I would like to aim for establishing clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences caused by the use of nuclear weapons as a part of departure for international nuclear disarmament efforts.” (End of quote. For your reference, the entire statement is also circulated.) Japan has a long-standing dedication to the promotion of disarmament and non-proliferation education. It is our core task to share with the world our experiences of the aftermath from the atomic bombings. Therefore, the role and responsibility of the younger generation has become critical since the direct sufferers of the atomic bombings, known as “Hibakusha”, are aging. It is with this in mind that Foreign Minister Kishida initiated in June a commission mechanism called “Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons”. Together with the “Hibakusha”, young communicators are devoted in providing a clear
understanding of the use of nuclear weapons by preserving and passing on the facts and stories of suffering and survival. In two weeks, I will have the pleasure of introducing the first youth communicators to this Council Chamber.

Japan also believes that when we discuss the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, it should be conducted in an open and inclusive manner. As Foreign Minister Kishida expressed, it should be a point of departure that every State can share regardless of their possession of such weapons.

Mr. President,

At the same time, if the international community truly wishes to abolish nuclear weapons, it is not possible to circumvent the wider underlying security conjunctures closely tied with the existence of nuclear weapons. In the case of Japan, this predicament is at the forefront of nuclear and security risks in the region. In this context, I would like to quote again my Foreign Minister's words during the round table, (I quote) "I would like to tackle nuclear disarmament by focusing on "three reduction" areas that serve as a realistic and concrete approach towards "a world without nuclear weapons." That is, (1) reduction of the number of nuclear weapons, (2) reduction of the role of nuclear weapons, and (3) reduction of the incentive for development and possession of the nuclear weapons." (End of quote) This idea is based on a responsible and pragmatic approach to develop a sufficiently practical strategy of nuclear disarmament to effectively deal with the impending risk. To this end, a number of nuclear disarmament measures can be and have been implemented unilaterally and bilaterally. However, a world without nuclear weapons is not conceivable without further multilateral measures. As such, this Conference is supposed to be the venue where we reconcile the real risks and long-lasting hope from the people of the world so that we move forward to achieve our shared final goal. The Conference needs to end its stalemate and respond to its high expectation and responsibility.

Finally Mr. President,

Japan will host an NPDI Ministerial Meeting in April 2014 in Hiroshima. Among other initiatives, I hope that the convening of this meeting in such a historic location will give further impetus to nuclear disarmament. Japan always stands ready to work with you, Mr. President, as well as every other State to draw us closer to a peaceful and secure world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you, Mr. President.