

Remarks by Ambassador Ogasawara, Permanent Representative of Japan to the Conference on Disarmament, at the Plenary Meeting on June 30, 2020

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President for your assumption of this important responsibility of the CD Chair at this very challenging juncture of time. Please be assured of our full support to your presidency. I would like to express Japan's appreciation for the firm determination that Austria and the other P6+2 members have shown to resume the work of the CD. The creation of this new format of CD plenary with an option of virtual participation demonstrates itself how our common efforts can overcome the new challenges and difficulties facing us all.

I would like to pay tribute to the innovative work done by the Secretariat which has made today's meeting possible despite unprecedented technical constraints while meeting the requirements of inclusiveness. We are also delighted that Member States have supported the decision of the presidency to resume the activities of the CD and are participating remotely or in person in it, expressing their commitment to the important role played by this body.

We are thankful for Australia's work as former President, in managing the recent unprecedented challenges and successfully maintaining our unity through a series of bilateral, regional, and P6+2 meetings while facing various constraints due to COVID-19. Japan expects that the P6+2 will continue this constructive coordination process and we will continue to support it. Thanks to today's intervention, we have found that the results of the meetings Australian Ambassador Mansfield has conducted extremely rich and useful to understand the current status of Member States' interests and thinking on substantial topics of the CD. We support every initiative to invigorate substantive discussion which will create favorable conditions conducive eventually to future multilateral disarmament negotiations. Japan also associate its support to the ones expressed by many of the previous speakers in favor of the

Australian initiative to make the rules of procedure gender neutral.

Let me also extend my heartfelt welcome to the three new Ambassadors of Argentina, Republic of Korea, and Tunisia.

From the current pandemic crisis which is unfortunately ongoing, we can, in my view, draw two preliminary lessons relevant to the work of the CD.

First, this crisis has led the international community to reaffirm the value of human life, which reminded us of the possible devastating effects that weapons of mass destruction may inflict on humankind. This recognition renews the priority of the arms control architecture in general and that of the CD in particular.

Second, this crisis underlines the importance of joint international efforts to overcome the common threats faced by the world. This recognition led to convince us, but now is the time for international bodies like the CD, to be infused with a spirit of cooperation rather than one of division. In this regard, I fully agree with you, Mr. President, that Member States should focus on “what unites us more than on what divides us.”

We believe these widely shared perceptions emerging from the pandemic crisis concurred to highlight the importance and expectation for the CD to achieve its mandate and to produce tangible outcomes.

Unfortunately, we do not have much time remaining in the current session, yet we strive to do our best so that the work of the CD may be as fruitful as possible under your eminent presidency backed by the P6+2 coordination process.

Thank you for your attention.