

**Remarks by Ambassador Ogasawara, Permanent
Representative of Japan to the Conference on
Disarmament, at the Plenary Meeting on August 13, 2020**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President for your assumption of this important responsibility of this august body at this challenging time. Please be assured of our full support to you.

I wholeheartedly support your decision to hold today's meeting in a hybrid format for the sake of inclusiveness at the current exceptional health conditions. I would also like to thank the Secretariat for the extensive support it has provided to us throughout this challenging period.

Significance and Activities of the CD

Mr. President,

While fully appreciating precious endeavors undertaken by the P6+2 to advance the CD's work, we regret that no consensus was reached on the Programme of Work (POW) package that would have enabled us to launch substantive discussions in a structured manner and paved the way to start negotiations on new disarmament instruments. We, the CD member states, need to show the world the relevance of the CD in tackling the problems posed by the current severe international security environment. To this end, the CD should conduct substantial discussions to lay the groundwork for a future commencement of disarmament negotiations, which is the core mandate of this body, irrespective of the adoption of the POW. Japan therefore welcomes any practical approaches enabling substantial discussions on the agenda items of the CD, for example, ones based on an adopted Schedule of Activities.

The cooperation among the P6+2 as well as an enhanced leadership derived from it were a significant positive development this year. In particular, I found efforts of the P6+2 to lay out all the activities for this year helpful. I sincerely hope that next year's presidencies will continue this good practice.

Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. President,

As you have pointed out, it has been seventy-five years since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This year at the Peace Memorial Ceremony in Hiroshima on August 6th and in Nagasaki on August 9th, Japanese Prime Minister Abe delivered his speech. He took note in his speech of the current severe security environment as well as of the difference in positions among States on the matter of nuclear disarmament. Prime Minister Abe called for further efforts to reduce mistrust through mutual engagement and dialogue in order to build a common ground. In his speech, Prime Minister Abe reiterated his commitment to lead international efforts toward the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons by working tenaciously to build bridges between the States with different views and to prompt actions by and dialogue between the States.

On a similar note, I would like to emphasize the importance for the coming NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful outcome, especially because this year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty. In our view, concrete outcome in the field of nuclear disarmament is of crucial importance for the success of the Conference. Japan, for its part, is determined to continue and even redouble our efforts to achieve common ground through our national and collective efforts.

Now let me touch upon certain specific issues to which Japan attaches great importance as far as the CD activities are concerned, namely, FMCT and outer space.

FMCT

An FMCT is an important building block for a world without nuclear weapons. We must exert our political will to build on the discussions on FMCT thus far and to commence negotiations as soon as possible in the CD. The CD has discussed this matter for many years. The issues concerning the components of the Treaty have been amply addressed. I would like to recall that, since 2014, both the Group of Governmental Experts and the High-Level Expert Preparatory Group produced their consensus final documents that provided recommendations and indicated potential elements of a Treaty. We have to make best use of these valuable documents for our further efforts on this subject.

Outer Space

The second issue is the outer space. As countries increase their reliance on space systems for their security and economic development, it has become increasingly urgent to deal with risks that may prevent us from maintaining outer space as a peaceful, safe, stable and sustainable environment, open and accessible to all. We emphasize the need for Transparency and Confidence-building Measures (TCBMs) as well as enhanced communication among space actors in order to reduce the risks of misunderstanding and miscalculations with regard of outer space activities. We request all relevant countries to remain committed to their responsibilities and obligations under international law and to behave as a responsible actor in outer space. On its part, Japan is ready to play an active role in promoting this issue including but not limited to the discussions at the CD.

Other Priorities

Let me add, finally, that we support a discussion on the effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament, which could revitalize our work at this forum. Equally, we fully support the proposal by the former Australian Presidency to make the Rules of Procedure gender neutral.

In the remaining sessions, it will be important to quickly compile and agree on the annual report. Based on the review on our activities this year, the CD would benefit from a discussion on plans for next year's activities while exploring points of convergence and divergence on various topics including the ones I mentioned today.

In this regard, I look forward to further clarification from our UNODA and UNOG colleagues on the budgetary situation surrounding the CD. A briefing session by the UN Secretariat to the Member States of this body is very welcome. With current financial constraints due to COVID-19, we are grateful again for the leadership of the P6 + 2 in guiding us, in close cooperation with the Secretariat to enable us to properly conduct our work in order to complete our mandate, especially the adoption of the annual report for this year.