

Statement by the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations at  
the Open-ended Working Group on the Fourth Special Session of the General  
Assembly Devoted to Disarmament  
First Substantive Session, New York  
March 28, 2016

Mr. Chairperson,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of this Open-ended Working Group. I assure you and the bureau members the full support and cooperation of my delegation.

Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered from atomic bombings, has placed nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation central pillars in its foreign policy. We have been fully engaged in our leading role towards the realization of a world free of nuclear weapons, including through the NPT review process and the United Nations General Assembly.

Mr. Chairperson,

Looking over the recent situation of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we are concerned that the rift between the nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States seems to have widened more than ever.

For instance, last May, the 2015 NPT Review Conference was not able to adopt a final document. This was unfortunate given that a number of important issues, in particular the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons and effective measures on nuclear disarmament, were discussed actively. At the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly last fall, the fragmentation of the international community became more evident from the voting pattern of Member States to the resolutions related to the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and the resolution on Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations. More recently, not all key players in the nuclear disarmament field participated in the Open-ended Working Group Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations held in Geneva February this year.

In order to achieve results in nuclear disarmament, Japan firmly believes that practical and concrete measures with the cooperation between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States are necessary.

Mr. Chairperson,

Under these circumstances, any possible SSOD-IV should not widen divergences, but serve as a forum that contributes substantially to the enhancement of disarmament and non-proliferation through the cooperation among United Nations Member States. It is, therefore, important to maintain the practice of consensus as mentioned in the UNGA Resolution 65/66, which the past SSODs have always employed for reaching agreement including on its objectives and agenda. This practice is crucial from the viewpoint of gaining broader support for the SSOD-IV and participation of all the principal actors in the disarmament field.

Japan hopes that this OEWG builds and maintains a collegial and constructive atmosphere, and make efforts in reaching agreement on its objectives and agenda through an in-depth exchange of views. This positive exchange of views could contribute effectively to the creation of political support from the international community as well as confidence-building among States.

Mr. Chairperson,

The widening difference of views negatively affects discourse in the international disarmament fora. We need to tackle the stalemate of international discussions in this field. Japan reiterates its hope that matters regarding any possible SSOD-IV including its objectives and agenda would be agreed by consensus.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.