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Statement by H. E. Ambassador Yoshifumi Okamura
Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
At the High-level Meeting to commemorate and promote
the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons
26 September 2016

Mr. President,

Let me begin by thanking you for taking the lead in convening this High-level meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr. President,

71 years ago, the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki claimed countless lives. Those who initially survived continued to suffer the after-effects, leading to still more deaths. Atomic bombings have brought about untold human suffering. Yet today, there remain more than 15,000 nuclear warheads worldwide. Worse, the international community has witnessed unacceptable activities, such as the nuclear tests by North Korea, which run

entirely counter to global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. As the only country in the world to have suffered from atomic bombings, Japan is more committed than ever to a world free of nuclear weapons.

In April of this year, the G7 Foreign Ministers met in Hiroshima and issued the Hiroshima Declaration on Nuclear Disarmament and Non-Proliferation. In May, President Obama visited Hiroshima and together with Prime Minister Abe sent a strong message of support for a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan is convinced that these messages from Hiroshima will be a source of hope for people around the world wishing to see a real advance in nuclear disarmament.

For this to happen, Japan firmly believes that practical and concrete measures are essential to promote nuclear disarmament. These measures should be based on cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states, as well as on a clear

understanding of the humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and an objective assessment of the severe security environment which the international community faces currently.

From this perspective, Japan will continue its efforts with particular focus on the following five areas:

First, the continuation of North Korea's nuclear and missile development poses a grave threat to peace and security of the entire international community and its nuclear tests are totally unacceptable. We continue to demand North Korea to stop these provocations and to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions and other commitments. Moreover, the adoption of a new Security Council resolution that includes additional sanctions is necessary and Japan will coordinate closely with countries concerned.

Second, Japan will submit a draft resolution on the total elimination of nuclear weapons to the First Committee of the General Assembly this fall. This resolution will lay out practical and concrete measures that aim at improving cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear weapon states. We hope this resolution will be widely supported.

Third, Japan will also work proactively with our Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) partners to bring success to the next NPT Review Process beginning in 2017.

Fourth, regarding the CTBT, Japan and Kazakhstan are playing a leading role as Co-facilitators of the early entry into force of the CTBT. We will also make efforts towards commencing negotiations on the Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) at an early date.

Fifth, Japan has an obligation to ensure that atomic bombing

victims' hopes for the total elimination of nuclear weapons are shared with all generations and all nations.

Before concluding, I have the pleasure to announce that Japan will host the UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in Nagasaki in December this year. Japan will continue to proactively promote a world free of nuclear weapons through the UN.

I thank you, Mr. President.

(End)