

Japan, 27 Jan 2011

Mr. President,

At the outset, please allow me to congratulate you, Ambassador Grinius, on your assumption of the high post of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament at this important juncture. It is to be acknowledged that the CD in 2011 faces some especially difficult challenges. I am fully confident, however, that under your wise guidance based on your long and rich experience here in Geneva, the Conference will meet the tasks entrusted to it by the international community. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Conference.

Mr. President,

Yesterday, at the beginning of this year's CD session, we once again listened intently to a strong plea by the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, for the CD to fulfill its role, which is to immediately commence negotiations on a multilateral disarmament treaty. It is regrettable that despite the historic agreement reached on a programme of work in 2009, no progress was made in this body last year. Given the heightened expectations of the international community, including those of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, over the past couple of years, repeating the same dysfunctional pattern of the last session is unacceptable.

My delegation strongly calls upon all the Member States to demonstrate their flexibility by swiftly agreeing to a programme of work and commencing substantive activities. For Japan, a programme of work can be based either on CD/1864, which was agreed in 2009, or CD/1889, which was tabled by the Brazilian Presidency last year.

Mr. President,

If the differing positions among us do not allow a breakthrough, notwithstanding our best efforts, it is incumbent upon us to take a fresh and innovative look at the ways in which the CD can effectively function in accordance with the Rules of Procedure while keeping them intact.

Firstly, the Rules of Procedure stipulate that the work of the Conference shall be conducted in plenary meetings and that any subject relevant to the work of the Conference may be raised therein. Taking this into account, even if we are not in a position to agree to the establishment of working groups, we can still conduct substantive work on the agenda items within the plenary meetings. This year, we must do substantive and in-depth work on all the core agenda items, fully utilizing the plenary meetings under the leadership of the Presidents.

In this respect, I welcome the constructive initiatives and leadership that the first President of this year's session demonstrated on Tuesday. Japan fully supports the President's plan for discussions in the plenary meetings.

Secondly, we should recall that the Rules of Procedure do not obligate a programme of work to include the establishment of any working group or its mandate; the Rules only indicate that a programme of work will include a schedule of the CD's activities. In fact, for a long time until the early 1990s, a programme of work mainly consisted of a schedule of activities, with the establishment of Ad Hoc Committees agreed to separately. More interestingly, in 1996 the CD continued its negotiations on the CTBT without agreeing to a programme of work at all. It did this by reestablishing the Ad Hoc Committee on the CTBT negotiations independently. Another interesting fact is that during those peak years of the CD, subsidiary bodies were not always established concurrently with the adoption of the agenda and the programme of work, but some of them were usually established later.

All these historical examples clearly show that there is no strict sequence concerning the CD's procedures and that the Rules of Procedure are flexible enough to allow room for productive work.

Mr. President,

As Japan takes a practical and concrete approach regarding nuclear disarmament, we believe that an FMCT is the next logical and critical step to achieving this goal after the CTBT. Indeed, I cannot imagine any road towards a world free of nuclear weapons without firstly banning the

production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, which is the core element of their warheads. An FMCT, therefore, is indispensable for progressive nuclear disarmament as well as non-proliferation.

To start negotiations does not prejudice their outcome, and even if we do succeed in producing a single text of a treaty, it will be left for sovereign states to decide whether they will sign and ratify it or not. Still, an FMCT can serve as an impregnable legal basis for nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation like the NPT and the CTBT. As called upon in the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, the CD should immediately begin negotiations on an FMCT.

Besides this issue of a specific FMCT treaty, Japan is willing to participate in discussions, with a longer perspective, on how a multilateral nuclear disarmament framework or a nuclear weapons convention, as it is often referred to, should look like in the final phase of nuclear disarmament.

NSAs and PAROS are also important issues that this Conference needs to address. Japan will actively take part in substantive discussions on these issues.

Mr. President,

This year, we should at least conduct substantive work on the agenda items in plenary meetings. Irrespective of this, as we embark on this year's CD session, we need to start reflecting on the potential implications of yet another negative outcome, particularly in light of the High-Level Meeting on revitalizing the work of the CD convened by the UN Secretary General last September. The 2010 UN General Assembly gave us the chance of another year. Whether we will grab this opportunity or not is solely in our hands.

Thank you.