

Speech by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at the
Opening Ceremony of the “Hiroshima Round Table”
-Vision and Steps toward “A World without Nuclear Weapons”-

Governor Yuzaki, Distinguished Guests,

I am honored to be invited to the opening ceremony of the “Hiroshima Round Table” in my hometown of Hiroshima. It is the perfect time to hold this round table which focuses on nuclear disarmament and arms control in the East Asian region, since the region is confronted with nuclear risks, including the North Korean nuclear issue. The Government of Japan will closely cooperate with “Hiroshima for Global Peace Plan” of Hiroshima Prefecture, which we share an ambition for “a world without nuclear weapons”.

As the first Foreign Minister who is from Hiroshima, an atomic bombed city, I will proactively work on nuclear disarmament. I have already pledged this resolution in public during the press conference of my inauguration.

Last April, I attended the 6th Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) in the Hague, the Netherlands. Throughout the meeting, I had meaningful discussions with other Foreign Ministers, including the Netherlands’ Foreign Minister. As we exchanged our opinions, I strongly encouraged the group at the political level to contribute towards a successful Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference. The NPDI has increasingly gained momentum in the field of nuclear disarmament. During the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference, we were able to have an in-depth discussion with the five nuclear-weapon states, including the U.S. Our strengths are strong political support and concrete, practical proposals from our group’s Foreign Ministers.

In order to realize “a world without nuclear weapons,” it is important for all of us to widely share this vision. For this purpose, it is essential to outline realistic and concrete steps for cooperative action within the international community, and to steadily implement them. These tasks are precisely the objectives of the NPDI. The importance of concrete action towards this achievement is stated in the report of the “International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND).” The former

Foreign Ministers Kawaguchi and Evans, who are attending this ceremony today, took leadership in making this report.

Japan's nuclear disarmament resolutions to the UN General Assembly have played a significant role in calling for united action to the international community. The former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Yohei Kono, who is also here today, took initiative in submitting the resolution when he was a Foreign Minister. Ever since 1994, Japan has continuously submitted the resolution every year and it always adopted with an overwhelming majority. We can proudly state that Japan's nuclear disarmament resolutions are a sound example of our country's leadership in the field of the arms control and disarmament.

In the beginning of my speech, I expressed my commitment to tackling nuclear disarmament as a Foreign Minister from the bombed city. The foundation for this nuclear disarmament effort must be built upon two important notions. First, we should have a clear understanding of humanitarian consequences caused by the use of nuclear weapons. As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings, it is our country's mission to pass down the story of the tremendous sufferings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki across borders and generations. I would like to aim for establishing clear understanding of the humanitarian consequences caused by the use of nuclear weapons as a part of departure for international nuclear disarmament efforts.

Second, we should recognize the reality of today's international community that is facing the increasingly diversifying nuclear risks, such as North Korea's and Iran's nuclear issues and the threat of nuclear terrorism. In East Asia, it has been observed that there is a continued lack of transparency in the nuclear force build-up, and thus the environment surrounding our country is filled with increasingly serious nuclear and security risks. In this regard, it is our role as a responsible government to develop a sufficiently practical strategy of nuclear disarmament to effectively deal with the impending risk.

Based on this idea, aiming for "a world without nuclear weapons," I would like to tackle nuclear disarmament by focusing on "three reduction" areas that serve as a realistic and concrete approach towards "a world without nuclear weapons." That is, (1) reduction of the number of nuclear weapons, (2) reduction of the role of nuclear weapons, and (3) reduction of the incentive for development and possession of the

nuclear weapons. In order to reduce the number of nuclear weapons it is necessary to begin with improving the transparency of the present state of nuclear strategy and nuclear doctrine, and then to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in national security policy. Moreover, due to the security risk in the region and the incentives generated by the international community to develop and possess nuclear weapons, we need to reduce the motivation to develop and possess them through the improvement of the security environment. Based upon practical proposals and efforts we have made through NPDI, we will bolster our efforts in building up the blocks for our common goal.

The upcoming 2014 Ministerial Meeting of NPDI is scheduled to be held here in Hiroshima on April 12th. At the meeting, I would like each participating foreign minister to see the reality of the nuclear bombing and to have a dialogue with civil society. From this nuclear-bombed area I would like to send a message that brings more and more countries to recognize the inhumanity of nuclear weapons.

Non-proliferation and disarmament education plays an important role in galvanizing international public opinion in order to share our aim of “a world without nuclear weapons.” As mentioned earlier, as “the only country to have suffered atomic bombings during the war,” it is our mission to pass down the tragedy of the use of nuclear weapons to the world and future generations. Some of the atomic bomb survivors have been working hard as “Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons” throughout the world. In addition, I have announced the establishment of “Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons” in the Hague, the Netherlands, in April. Today, the first communicators have just been assigned to this title. Through this undertaking, we hope that the younger generation will be able to discover independently what they can do to create “a world without nuclear weapons,” and that they deliver it to the world.

For the purpose of achieving our goal it is essential that citizens consider what steps can be taken from every possible aspect and how it can be implemented. I sincerely hope this roundtable starting today will provide such a precious opportunity.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.