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DELEGATION OF JAPAN TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mari Amano
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Japan
to the Conference on Disarmament**

**Seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention
on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of
Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction
(BWC)**

- General Debate -

Geneva, 5 December 2011

Mr. President,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Ambassador Paul van den Ijssel, on your assumption of the presidency to the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). I assure you of my delegation's utmost support and cooperation. I would also like to mention that Japan associates itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of Canada on behalf of the JACKSNNZ group. Nevertheless, I would like to highlight a number of points that are of interest to my country.

Mr. President,

With the rapid advances in science and technology, we need to prepare for potentially heightened risks associated with bio-technology and biological agents, particularly with regards to their illicit use or misuse. Japan strongly recognises that taking appropriate action to tackle biological threats is an urgent issue. In particular, life scientists play a crucial role in the BWC, and as such it is indispensable for its implementation to focus on education and awareness-raising for scientists. At the same time, it is also essential to enhance biosafety and biosecurity measures in developing countries as well as to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of infrastructure for disease surveillance. In this connection, the work of the Implementation Support Unit to assist the States Parties is highly appreciated and has contributed significantly to the universalization and operation of the Convention.

Mr. President,

In order to strengthen the BWC, Japan has been especially active in the following three areas.

The first is enhancing national implementation of the BWC. For national implementation it is important for each country to introduce domestic legislation and establish system in order to safely and appropriately control high-risk pathogens. On the other hand, over-regulation of scientific research which may hinder innovation of science and technology must be avoided. As part of our efforts in this area, Japan has submitted a working paper to this Review Conference on awareness-raising among life scientists and on the experiences in this field of a number of countries. In addition, in August this year the Science Council of Japan hosted a symposium in Tokyo for scientists on the emerging risks posed by life sciences, where presentations were given by leading life scientists. Furthermore, Japan and Switzerland will hold a side-event during the current Review Conference in order to contribute to further awareness-raising.

The second area is the strengthening of intersessional activities. Japan recognizes that in light of progress in life sciences it has become necessary to review annually the developments relevant to the BWC. To increase the effectiveness of the intersessional activities, Japan in cooperation with Australia has proposed an idea for the next intersessional period. We consider it desirable to establish three open-ended working groups by reorganizing the existing Meeting of Experts.

We believe that the creation of three open-ended working groups, each covering one subject, within the meeting of experts will allow for the continual discussion of important issues such as confidence building, international cooperation and assistance, and the review of science and technology. It will also provide more flexibility to adapt to the new developments concerning the BWC.

The third is confidence building measures (CBMs). Japan regards CBMs as important for promoting transparency, and we have made CBM submissions every year since their introduction. Additionally, we are considering to further enhance transparency by not only providing information to the BWC States Parties, but also making it available to the public. Taking into account that the CBM format has not been modified since 1991, we believe that now it is high time to revise it. In this regard, Japan would like to commend the effort by Germany, Norway and Switzerland to provide a proposal as a basis for discussion.

Mr. President,

The international community now stands at a critical juncture concerning what next steps should be taken over the following five years to enhance the BWC. In this regard, the Seventh Review Conference bears the great responsibility of paving the way forward for addressing the challenges ahead. Japan is positive that this Conference will produce constructive outcomes and we are ready to contribute to the deliberations for this end.

Thank you Mr. President.