

Japan's View on UNGA Resolution 78/31
"Youth, disarmament and non-proliferation"

In response to note verbale ODA-2025-00025/YOUTH from the Office of Disarmament Affairs, pursuant to OP6 of the above-mentioned resolution.

Introduction

On the occasion of the 80th year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and in recognition of Nihon Hidankyo's long-standing efforts highlighted by the Nobel Peace Prize awarded last year, Japan reiterates the importance of testimonies from communities and individuals affected by the use and testing of nuclear weapons, including hibakushas--those who have suffered from the use and testing of nuclear weapons, regardless of nationality or origin--, and emphasizes that it has been widely recognized as an indispensable element of disarmament and non-proliferation education.

At the same time, there is broad recognition of the urgent need to strengthen efforts to preserve and pass on these testimonies to younger generations, especially as the number of those who directly experienced the atomic bombings and are able to share their firsthand accounts continue to decline.

Against this backdrop, Japan, as a champion of Action 38 of the UN Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament ("Establish a platform for youth engagement") and as a sponsor of the aforementioned resolution, reiterates its strong commitment to promoting understanding of the realities of the atomic bombings. As reflected in UNGA Resolution 79/41, which Japan took leadership in drafting, outreach and engagement with younger generations is recognized as a key component in global efforts to promote awareness on the realities of atomic bombings.

Japan believes that educating, engaging and empowering younger generations in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation contributes to the international community's efforts toward a world without nuclear weapons. This is achieved not only by transmitting the memories, aspirations, and efforts of those affected by the use and testing of nuclear weapons to the future generations of leaders, but also by encouraging those generations to bring diverse, innovative and forward-looking perspectives to build a more robust and sustainable foundation for dialogue on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Japan's initiatives

- Since 1983, Japan has welcomed young diplomats every year from member states that are participating in the United Nations Disarmament Fellowship Programme to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This programme has served as an effective means to highlight the inhumane nature of nuclear weapons as witnessed by hibakusha, and to promote continued disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. To date, 1,049 fellows have visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki to learn about the realities of the use of nuclear weapons. Japan is also working with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs in maintaining a network of alumni fellows.
- In 2010, Japan launched the “Special Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons” programme to share firsthand experiences of atomic bombing survivors (hibakusha). In 2013, Japan initiated the “Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons” programme, under which young people are expected to share the tragic consequences of nuclear weapon use across borders and generations. As of 31 January 2025, a total of 320 special communicators (on 108 occasions) and 787 youth communicators (on 55 occasions) had been dispatched worldwide through these programmes. In this regard, Japan appreciates UNODA's support in facilitating meetings with and engagement of these youth communicators.
- In 2023, Japan contributed 10 million US dollars to the United Nations to establish the “Youth Leaders Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons”. The primary goal of this multi-year education and outreach programme is to bring future leaders from both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States to Japan to learn firsthand about the realities of the use of nuclear weapon, and to bring the lessons learned from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the wider world. The programme will conclude in 2030 and is structured in four phases over eight years. Over a two-year period, selected participants receive training in nuclear disarmament and arms control through online courses, followed by a week-long in-person study tour to Hiroshima and Nagasaki for a selected cohort. The first cohort (2023–2025), consisting of 100 participants aged 18 to 29 from 63 countries, was selected from more than 2,000 applicants. The programme was officially launched with an online event on 18 December 2023 under the auspices of the United Nations. Upon completion, alumni will play a key role in training and mentoring subsequent cohorts.

Comments

Japan believes that youth are not merely beneficiaries of disarmament and non-proliferation education, but active agents and catalysts for change. Youth, in particular, are proficient users of information and communication technologies, including artificial intelligence. As the international community and the United Nations, utilizing technological progress and creative ideas in the area of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation advocacy is essential to remain attentive to the rapidly evolving technological landscape and ensure that our programs remain relevant in this dynamic environment. Japan welcomes youth engagement in disarmament and non-proliferation and hopes that its initiatives will support and inspire their efforts, and open opportunities for their future endeavors towards a world free of nuclear weapons.