Japan’s view on Resolution 77/52 “United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education” adopted by the General Assembly on 7 December 2022

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, Japan is committed to ensuring that the humanitarian consequences and tragedies of Hiroshima and Nagasaki will never be forgotten. With that aim, and also as champion of action 38, entitled “Establish a platform for youth engagement”, under the Secretary-General’s disarmament agenda, Securing Our Common Future: An Agenda for Disarmament, Japan places utmost importance on disarmament and non-proliferation education, especially for the younger generation, so as to encourage that generation to think for itself and act on matters of international security, and disarmament and non-proliferation, at the national, social and individual levels.

The final document of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held in 2010, highlighted education as a useful and effective means to advance nuclear disarmament. It encouraged all States to implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education of 2002. Japan reiterates the significance of those recommendations and encourages all States Members of the United Nations to put them into practice.

Japan is of the view that it is important to carry out disarmament and non-proliferation education in an inclusive and collaborative way with all relevant actors, in all States and regions, and for everyone regardless of generation or gender. In his 2002 report, the Secretary-General stressed the importance of partnerships among Governments, international and regional organizations, and civil society organizations. Japan has made an effort to encourage dialogue and strengthen cooperation among a diverse range of actors.

Japan’s efforts have included the following:

(a) Japan has invited young diplomats from various countries through the United Nations disarmament fellowship programme every year since 1983, and to date, 1,027 fellows have travelled to Japan and visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki to learn about the realities of the use of nuclear weapons.
(b) Japan has sponsored the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in different cities since 1989, where representatives of States, the United Nations, academic institutions and civil society from around the world engage in insightful discussions.

(c) Japan submitted a joint working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education, together with the members of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), to the first and third sessions of the Preparatory Committees for the 10th NPT Review Conference, following a joint working paper submitted to the 2015 NPT Review Conference. Furthermore, Japan made a joint statement on disarmament and non-proliferation education on behalf of 55 States at the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the 10th NPT Review Conference and on behalf of 89 States at the 10th NPT Review Conference.

(d) Japan has published white papers that provide useful information on disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as pamphlets summarizing Japan’s efforts.

(e) Japan initiated a programme entitled “Special Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons” in 2010 for the purpose of sharing the firsthand experience of atomic bombing survivors (hibakusha). In addition, Japan launched a programme entitled “Youth Communicator for a World without Nuclear Weapons” in 2013. Under this programme, young people are expected to share the catastrophes of the use of nuclear weapons beyond borders and generations. As of 30 April 2024, a total of 316 special communicators, on 105 occasions and 739 youth communicators on 50 occasions, had been dispatched around the world through such commission programmes.

(f) Japan has held the forum of Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons three times since March 2016, with a view to revitalizing the activities of Youth Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons and strengthening the networks of youth communicator alumni in Japan and other countries.

(g) Japan has undertaken efforts to make testimonies of the hibakusha more widely available and has translated them into 13 languages: Dutch, English, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukrainian and Urdu.
(h) In 2015, the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in cooperation with the Japanese Government, opened a permanent exhibition on the atomic bombings at the United Nations Office at Vienna, following those in New York and Geneva, to promote understanding of the terrible devastation caused by the use of nuclear weapons.

(i) In 2023, Japan contributed 10 million dollars (USD) to the UN to establish the “Youth Leaders Fund for a World without Nuclear Weapons.” This Fund was announced by Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio at the 10th NPT Review Conference in August 2022 as a pillar of the “Hiroshima Action Plan”. The primary goal of this 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 nuclear weapons use and bring the lessons of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the rest of the world.

The programme started in 2023 and will conclude in 2030, –85 years after the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and on the 60th anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT. The eight-year period is divided into 4 phases, with two years for each phase. Over the course of two years, the selected participants receive training on issues relating to nuclear disarmament and arms control through online courses, with a selected cohort going on a week-long in-person study tour to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Upon completion of the programme, the alumni will play a key role in training and mentoring the next cohort of interested young nuclear disarmament advocates.

The 100 participants of the first cohort (2023-2025) of the programme were selected in 2023, and the official launch of the learning programme took place in the form of an online event on 18 December 2023 under the auspices of the UN.

(j) In his speech at the UN General Assembly Plenary Debate in September 2023, Prime Minister KISHIDA Fumio announced the establishment of the "Japan Chair for a world without nuclear weapons" to be based within international research institutes and think tanks. Following the announcement, Japan has contributed approx. 22 million dollars (USD) in total to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) Asia to establish research posts dedicated to researching nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation at each institute.

In addition to conducting research on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, researchers of the “Japan Chair” are expected to disseminate the results of such research by participating in and organizing related conferences and to contribute to
deepening international discussions in this area, while overcoming the dichotomy between “deterrence or disarmament”.

Japan is determined to continue its efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation education and encourages other countries and international and civil society organizations to join efforts in this field and recognize the power and promise of education to achieve a world without nuclear weapons. This would contribute to reinforcing a culture of peace and to building bridges through dialogue as a basis for peace and a sustainable future.