

Introductory Remark

Hello, everyone. I am Hideo Asano, a Secretariat Staff at the Japan Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons and the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition.

First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to the Japanese government for providing an opportunity for civil society members to present our ideas and have dialogue with the International Group of Eminent Persons.

In 2010, Japanese civil society members formed [the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition](#), which consists of around 30 Japanese civil society organizations. Since then, we have worked toward achieving a world without nuclear weapons. In order to strengthen our efforts, this April we launched a nation-wide, cross-partisan campaign named [the Japan Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons](#), which calls for Japan's signing and ratification of the TPNW at the earliest date possible.

Today I have the honor to participate in this session together with Rika Watanabe from Peace Boat and Yosuke Watanabe from Peace Depot. Both organizations are members of the Japan NGO Network. We will make statements based on our respective policy priorities.

The most highlighted topic in Japanese civil society today is the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). Public polls indicate that over 60% of the public believe Japan should join the TPNW. Support among policymakers is also growing. Presently 36% of Japanese Diet members support Japan joining the treaty.

Your attention to our statements while keeping these points in mind will be highly appreciated. We look forward to having a fruitful discussion with you. Thank you.

Statement at the NGO Session of the Fourth Meeting of the International Group of Eminent Persons for a World without Nuclear Weapons (IGEP)

1. (Hello everyone. Thank you so much for having me here. I am Hideo Asano.) I would like to ask the eminent persons here to add the following three agenda to your discussion and proposals: the complementarity of the TPNW with the NPT, the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, and the policy of no-first-use of nuclear weapons.
2. The first point is examining the complementarity of the TPNW with the NPT. We believe the TPNW reinforces the NPT in two main aspects. The first is nuclear disarmament and abolition. The [13 Practical Steps](#) agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference affirm “[a]n unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI.” The TPNW is also positioned on the roadmap toward that goal, as illustrated by Prime Minister Kishida and the Japanese government [stating](#) that the TPNW is “an important treaty that could be regarded as a final passage to a world without nuclear weapons.” In this sense, the TPNW complements the pursuit of nuclear disarmament under Article VI of the NPT.
3. We believe nuclear-weapon States and nuclear allied States can also make a similar statement as this. At the least, it is possible for the Japanese government, which has already made this statement domestically, to do so at NPT meetings.
4. Additionally, in our view, efforts through the TPNW to [stigmatize and delegitimize](#) nuclear weapons as a security means contributes to nuclear nonproliferation. We are facing growing calls for nuclear weapons, including in relation to the ongoing armed conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza as well as heightening regional tensions. For nuclear nonproliferation, it is increasingly critical to ensure that non-nuclear weapon States will not see nuclear weapons as an attractive security means. The TPNW is playing an important role in such efforts by stigmatizing and delegitimizing nuclear weapons.
5. The second is exploring ways to further promote and deepen international understanding of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons. With the ongoing conflicts, we have witnessed increased loose talks over nuclear weapons, such as the Russian President’s nuclear saber-rattling, an Israeli official’s statement that using nuclear weapons against Gaza is one option, and recent U.S. politicians’ references to Hiroshima and Nagasaki in connection with the military attack in Gaza, among others. Against this backdrop of growing nuclear risks, [strengthening](#) the norm of nuclear non-use

(one may call it the nuclear taboo) is more crucial than ever. This requires raising global awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

6. Japan has a moral authority to lead such efforts through capitalizing on its position as the sole country that has suffered wartime atomic bombings. As an idea, the Japanese government could propose to host a conference on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons in Japan, while reaffirming at NPT meetings its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the nuclear weapon use. Japan (and other nuclear-weapon and nuclear allied States) could also pursue [cooperation](#) with TPNW States Parties and its Scientific Advisory Group, which have discussed and conducted intensive research on this topic.
7. Next year will mark the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Japanese civil society hopes for the Japanese government and the international community at large to take bold initiative to highlight the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons globally at this important timing.
8. The third is highlighting the idea to promote nuclear no-first-use (NFU) talks, including those engaging both the U.S. and China. Indeed, [China](#) has shown interest in the idea of nuclear-weapon States negotiating to adopt a policy of NFU against each other. A U.S. official stated in [a recent interview](#) that the U.S. would engage in a conversation on the NFU if Beijing would address questions of Washington about the Chinese nuclear no-first-use policy. We would support the commencement of such a dialogue, as it might lead to breaking the current impasse, bringing progress on risk reduction, arms control, and nuclear disarmament. Beyond the U.S.-China context, we also uphold the idea that all nuclear-armed States should consider adoption of a NFU policy.
9. Historically, however, U.S. nuclear allies, particularly Japan, have reportedly lobbied against U.S. adoption of a NFU policy during the [Obama](#) and [Biden](#) administrations. While we note their [security concerns](#) regarding U.S. adoption of a policy of NFU, their concerns should not foreclose an opportunity to “have dialogue” on this topic, which has the potential to improve regional and international security as earlier stated. Therefore, we ask nuclear allied States, including Japan, to support, or at least to not oppose, the idea of U.S.-China bilateral talks on NFU as well as adoption of such a policy by nuclear-armed States.
10. I would be happy to hear your opinions on these agenda and look forward to having a candid discussion. Thank you for listening.