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Japan's efforts in disarmament and non-proliferation education

Working paper submitted by Japan

Introduction

1. Japan has made its position clear to the international community that it is as a nation dedicated to peace and working towards a safe world free of nuclear weapons. As the only country to have experienced the devastation of atomic bombs, Japan is committed to ensuring that Hiroshima and Nagasaki are never forgotten, thereby preventing the recurrence of such tragedies. At the same time, we recognize that achieving the goal of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation requires long-term efforts by a number of generations as it is closely linked to the national security of each country. Therefore, it is extremely important to hand down our desire for peace and our collective memory and experiences on disarmament and non-proliferation to future generations. With this aim, Japan places the utmost importance on disarmament and non-proliferation education, especially for the younger generation. On the other hand, the younger generation can make its own contribution by providing new insights or perspectives when we tackle the challenges we are facing today. Based on these viewpoints, Japan has been taking initiatives in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. This working paper aims to share Japan's efforts in this field with other States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons so as to promote further disarmament and non-proliferation education.

I. United Nations Fellowship Programme

2. Each year since 1983, Japan has been inviting around 25 promising diplomats from all over the world to Japan, amounting to a total of more than 620 participants to date. In this fellowship programme, participants receive briefings on the disarmament and non-proliferation policies of Japan. The programme includes a visit to Hiroshima and Nagasaki to learn about Japan's experience of the atomic bombs. A large number of diplomats who have participated in this programme are



now actively working in the front lines of global disarmament diplomacy. Japan will continue to actively contribute to this programme.

II. United Nations Conference

3. Each year since 1989, Japan has sponsored a United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in a different local city, providing a valuable opportunity for distinguished disarmament experts from around the world to engage in useful discussions. Last year in August the Conference was held in Yokohama under the theme “Alarming nuclear proliferation crisis and regional and international peace and security” and gave rise to a very meaningful exchange of views. This year’s Conference is to be held in Sapporo in August.

III. Citizens’ forum

4. In August 2003, during the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues held in Osaka, a citizens’ forum on disarmament and non-proliferation education was held with the participation of 50 teachers from primary, junior high and senior high schools in Osaka, officials of international organizations, as well as various experts on disarmament and non-proliferation. A citizens’ forum on disarmament and non-proliferation education was also held in July 2004 during the United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Sapporo, and active discussions took place among teachers and experts.

IV. Ministry of Foreign Affairs materials (white paper and homepage)

5. In 2002, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan published in Japanese its white paper on disarmament entitled “Japan’s Disarmament Policy”, followed by an English version in 2003. In 2004, an updated edition, “Japan’s Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy”, was published in both Japanese and English. In 2006, the third edition was published in both Japanese and English. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also established, and regularly updates, a comprehensive homepage with readily available information on Japan’s activities in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

V. Participation in the United Nations Governmental Experts Group

6. Japan participated in the Group of Governmental Experts on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education, established following the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session, in August 2000, requesting the Secretary-General to prepare a study towards the advancement of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Group submitted a report to the Secretary-General two years later, containing a series of recommendations for immediate and long-term implementation, which formed the basis for the draft resolutions adopted by the General Assembly in 2002, 2004 and 2006.

VI. Inviting disarmament experts

7. Based on the recommendations from the United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education, since 2002 the Government of Japan has invited to Japan prominent educators on disarmament and non-proliferation. In November 2002 Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, representative of Educators for Social Responsibility, was invited to conduct a nuclear disarmament education tour in Japan, working with high school students, civic leaders, and *Hibakusha* or atomic bomb survivors in Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Tokyo.

8. Furthermore, to date Japan has invited the following experts:

Dr. Natalie Goldring from the Programme on Global Security and Disarmament at the University of Maryland, in January 2004

Professor William Potter from the Monterey Institute of International Studies, in February 2005

Dr. Jean Pascal Zanders, director of the Bio Weapons Prevention Project, in February 2006

Dr. Owen Greene, expert on small arms and light weapons, in March 2007.

VII. Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Seminar

9. The Center for the Promotion of Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in Japan held a Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Seminar in September 2005, for two days. The aim of this seminar was to deepen understanding on recent disarmament and non-proliferation trends, mainly for those citizens considering to take active roles in this field in the future. A seminar was also held over three days in 2006 and 2007 with a series of presentations covering a variety of related issues, resulting in a lively exchange between participants. Furthermore, lecturers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also attended the seminar.

VIII. Peace efforts by local governments

10. Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the only cities to have suffered the devastation of atomic bombs, hold a yearly Peace Ceremony in August, in the hope that they never see the recurrence of such a tragedy. At the ceremony, in front of numerous people from Japan and the world, the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively deliver a peace declaration, appealing for peace and expressing the hope that nuclear weapons will never be used again.

11. The World Conference of Mayors for Peace was launched by the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1982 and has been held every four years to encourage cities to work together towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Last time it was convened in Hiroshima in 2005, and currently there are 1,578 member cities in 120 countries, including major cities of the nuclear-weapon States.

12. The cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki along with the International Peace Research Association have established Hiroshima-Nagasaki Peace Study Courses in universities around the world by sending peace education materials and lecturers,

establishing university-level peace education models and exchanging opinions and methodology.

13. The Government of Japan has supported a number of efforts by local governments, universities, non-governmental organizations and various organizations to organize exhibitions in foreign countries relating to atomic bombs, including the Hiroshima-Nagasaki A-bomb exhibitions in La Paz, Bolivia, in August 2006.

IX. New initiatives

14. Building upon the above efforts, Japan intends to launch the following new initiatives to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education:

A. Student debating cup on disarmament and non-proliferation

15. Japan is of the view that it is important not only to inform the younger generation of the tragedy of nuclear weapons but also cultivate their “critical thinking” abilities. From this point of view, Japan intends to invite students from several countries, including nuclear-weapon States, and hold a debating competition with Japanese students, so as to provide them with the opportunity to obtain knowledge at first hand and think in a pragmatic manner.

B. Use of Manga comics

16. In order to attract attention to a rather difficult subject, it is helpful to take advantage of a tool that is easily accepted by young people. One of those tools is Manga, a part of Japanese pop culture which has become popular over the decades. It can convey Japan’s message effectively to young people on this issue.
