

DELEGATION OF JAPAN TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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STATEMENT BY MR. TOSHIO SANO
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AT THE FIFTH 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

Geneva, 19th November 2001

1 At the outset, I would like to extend to you my warmest congratulations on your assumption of the Presidency of this 5th Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention. I am most confident that, with the benefit of your diplomatic skills and your vast experience in the field of disarmament including the dedication and leadership you demonstrated so well as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Group for over seven years, the deliberations in this Conference will be highly constructive, fruitful and interesting. I can also assure you of my delegation's full support and co-operation as you lead the work of this Conference.

2. Shortly after the outrageous terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11th, the scare of anthrax unfolded unwarrantedly in the United States and innocent people have already lost their lives as a result of infection. On behalf of the Government and the people of Japan, I should like to express my profound condolences to the bereaved families of the victims. This is truly an act of terror against the whole international community as it continues to extend to other regions. These incidents have vividly demonstrated that the threat of biological weapons is real and imminent in our current world. It also illustrates the frightful and deadly damage they can provoke on a population once they are used on a massive scale.

First and foremost, we should note that it is against this backdrop that this 5th Review Conference is being held today. The international community is more than ever attentive to this Review Conference and to how the States Parties to the BWC will eventually manifest ways to respond to the threat of biological weapons. In response, we should be clear about demonstrating to the international community our full and united political will to fight against the threat of biological weapons. Japan, for its part, is ready to commit all its efforts to produce a meaningful outcome.

3. Japan has faithfully complied with all the obligations under the BWC since it ratified the Convention in 1982. Under Article 4 of the Convention, we enacted a

national implementing legislation for the BWC. Quite recently, in wake of the terrorist attacks in the United States, we have accepted the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings, and at this occasion we have taken legislative measures to strengthen the national legislation with further punitive actions against those who use biological weapons as well as those who disseminate biological agents and toxins.

In light of the purpose of Article X of the Convention, we have provided official development assistance for developing countries bilaterally or through international organisations in the relevant fields including biotechnology. For example, we have organised seminars, offered training programmes for researchers, and improved the research capabilities of institutions in those countries. Furthermore, in accordance with the agreement made at the previous Review Conferences, Japan has annually submitted relevant information for confidence-building.

We have also very actively participated along with other countries in the Ad Hoc Group with the aim of achieving a verification protocol to strengthen the Convention. It is regrettable that we could not finalise the negotiations by a target date this year. Nevertheless, we are still keen to continue all possible efforts towards the goal of strengthening the Convention.

4. In this Review Conference, we are expected to consider the "work done to strengthen the Convention in accordance with the decision of the 1994 Special Conference" as well as the review of the operations of the Convention. Japan is of the view that a multilateral legally-binding instrument which involves all the States Parties to the Convention is necessary for international efforts to strengthen the Convention. Therefore, we would like to strongly support the preservation of the multilateral negotiating process to that end.
5. Furthermore, as a result of the recent anthrax threats, it is of utmost significance to consider all relevant measures in a comprehensive manner to reduce the danger of

biological weapons. We are ready to examine any proposals submitted by the States Parties in an open-minded manner, which aim to enhance the validity of the Convention and, where appropriate, we are prepared to support them. For example, we support the idea of strengthening the existing international disease control and enhancing mechanism for sending response teams to cope with disease outbreaks. These measures can help reduce the effects of biological weapons and, consequently, weaken the incentives to develop them. At the same time, I would like to underline that these measures alone can not serve the goal of strengthening of the Convention. We sincerely hope that all useful measures are reflected in the outcome of the Final Document.

6. Finally, in light of the growing concerns of the international community about the threat of biological weapons and the increasing need for the strengthening of the Convention, the States Parties need to meet frequently during the intersessional period for close co-operation and taking further actions. Therefore, Japan supports the idea of setting up a strong follow-up mechanism after this Review Conference by meeting in whatever format including a preparatory meeting for the next Review Conference or an annual meeting of the States Parties.