Madam President,

I am speaking for the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition. The Network works to raise public awareness, promote dialogue between the government and civil society, and collaborate with various international initiatives including the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Against the will of the Hibakusha and many Japanese citizens, Japan still maintains a security policy which is dependent upon nuclear weapons. The Government of Japan was one of the few states dependent on nuclear weapons to send a delegation to speak at this conference.

However, in its remarks, the Government of Japan claimed that a legal prohibition on nuclear weapons cannot be effective without the participation of nuclear weapon states, and that it will deepen the divide between nuclear weapons states and non-nuclear weapon states. It thus concluded that it cannot participate in the negotiation of a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, which is the very mandate of this conference. This is a serious neglect of its responsibility.

It is wrong to assert that this treaty has no effect, just because many nuclear weapon states and nuclear dependent states are not immediately participating. Rather, it is important to create mechanisms which will enable these states to join the treaty, if not now, in the future. This is an important challenge for the institutional arrangements of this treaty. Consideration is required regarding the form in which nuclear weapon states and nuclear dependent states could potentially join this treaty, and clarification of these conditions.

Once the treaty is concluded, efforts must be made to expand the signatory states, and have it come into force as early as possible. It is important to engage the nuclear weapon states and nuclear dependent states in this process, and we must work now to construct mechanisms for that purpose. Civil society is prepared to contribute to this process, as it has until now. Increasing awareness of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons is sure to contribute to the expansion of signatory states and achieving the universality of the treaty.

Madam President,

The group of nuclear dependent states, including Japan, proposes a “Progressive Approach” through building blocks. Certainly, each of these practical measures related to nuclear disarmament and verification – so-called building blocks – is important. In a treaty prohibiting

United Nations conference to negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination

New York, 31 March 2017

Topic 3 Institutional arrangement

Intervention of the Japan NGO Network for Nuclear Weapons Abolition

Delivered by Akira Kawasaki, Peace Boat
nuclear weapons, many of these measures could be incorporated, for example in the format of protocols, into the programme for implementation. The claim that the development of a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons must wait until the stage of the “final block” lacks reasonable ground.

If those states dependent upon nuclear weapons are truly committed to a “world free of nuclear weapons,” they must not boycott the negotiation, but rather, they must participate. They should utilize the nuclear disarmament measures they themselves have taken in the development of the nuclear weapons prohibition treaty, leading towards the total elimination. From this perspective, we call upon all states not participating in the March session to join the June-July session, and to fulfill their responsibilities.

Lastly, let me reiterate that the the treaty to prohibit nuclear weapons must reflect the call of “No More Hibakusha” in express terms, acknowledging the suffering of all the survivors as well as their efforts and dedication, and calling for further research and education regarding the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons.

Thank you very much.