

The 20th United Nations Conference on Disarmament Issues in Saitama

(August 27-29, 2008, Saitama City)

Overall Theme:

Nuclear Disarmament, Non-Proliferation, and Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

Plenary I: Challenges to the NPT regime and initiatives to overcome them

Session 1: Efforts towards a world free of nuclear weapons

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1. Introduction

Mr. chairman,

At the outset, I am honored to have this opportunity to attend the 20th UN Conference on Disarmament Issues being held here in Saitama City. I believe this is a significant meeting which greatly contributes to stimulating discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for their hard work in organizing this conference and to the people of Saitama for preparing for the event so effectively.

2. International Trends in Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Mr. chairman,

- (1) To tackle the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction remains very difficult task for the international community. The nuclear issues of North Korea and Iran, in particular, represent serious challenges to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the united action by the international community is required.
- (2) The North Korean nuclear issue poses a serious threat to the peace and security not only for Japan but also for East Asia and the entire

international community. While some progress has been made in the Six-Party Talks process since 2007, we should not forget that there lies a long way to go. North Korea recently submitted a declaration on its nuclear programs. As the next step, an effective verification of the declaration has to be conducted to ensure that it leads to the abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs by North Korea. Japan, in close cooperation with the United States and other countries, will continue to make its efforts to achieve the ultimate goal of the Six-Party Talks, which is the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, through the full implementation of the Joint Statement on September 19, 2005.

- (3) As for Iran, regrettably, Iran has continued its nuclear program despite repeated calls from the international community and has failed to comply with its obligations under the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, including the suspension of uranium enrichment-related activities. Japan is making its utmost efforts to resolve this issue. For example, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda made a direct demarche to the president of Iran this June, while Japan has faithfully implemented all the relevant Security Council resolutions. All countries should continue such persistent efforts to persuade Iran.
- (4) The traditional concept of nuclear deterrence is not necessarily effective in addressing the problem of nuclear terrorism by non-state actors. Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001, the danger of a nuclear terrorist attack, which may result from nuclear and other radioactive materials falling into the hands of non-state actors, has been pointed out. The international community has reviewed its counter-terrorism measures with new urgency and has redoubled its efforts; Japan has been actively participating in these efforts. We must also take swift action to address such issues as the further proliferation of nuclear technology by countries of concern.
- (5) While all of these issues are causes for concern, it should be noted that there is growing international momentum behind calls for a new initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, as seen in the proposals made by eminent figures, including former US Secretary of State Henry

Kissinger in January 2007 and 2008. These proposals were echoed in the similar appeal issued recently by former British Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind and others. The call for a nuclear-weapon-free world by Dr. Kissinger and others in the *Wall Street Journal* have much in common with the resolutions on nuclear disarmament that Japan has submitted to the UN General Assembly since 1994. Given this new climate, there is now a greater need than ever for the international community to unite in cooperation to deal effectively with the issues surrounding the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime.

- (6) In this context, Japan and Australia decided to launch the Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, co-chaired by former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and former Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi, both of whom are present here today. We hope that this commission will hold meaningful discussions marked by flexible thinking from new perspectives.

3. The G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit

Mr. chairman,

- (1) Under these circumstances, at the G8 Summit held in Hokkaido this year, non-proliferation was discussed as an important theme alongside the global economy, climate change and African development. In particular, the Leaders of the G8 delivered a strong message on the nuclear issues of North Korea and Iran, directly confirming their unity in seeking peaceful and diplomatic resolutions. As for North Korea, apart from the nuclear issue, Japan explained its relations with North Korea including the abduction issue. The Leaders expressed their understanding on Japan's position and urged that the issue be resolved in their declaration. On the issue of nuclear disarmament, the G8 delivered a message welcoming ongoing reductions in nuclear weapons and calling on all nuclear-weapon States to reduce their nuclear arsenals in a transparent manner.
- (2) The G8 Leaders also delivered a message regarding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A growing number of countries have expressed their interest in nuclear power as a means of addressing climate change—thanks

to its low greenhouse gas emissions—and of meeting rapidly increasing demand for energy. In light of this situation, the G8 leaders reiterated that safeguards/ nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear safety and nuclear security (3S) are fundamental principles for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and the “International Initiative on 3S-Based Nuclear Energy Infrastructure” has been launched.

4. Toward a Successful NPT Review Conference

Mr. chairman,

- (1) Taking into account the various results of this summit, I would now like to turn to the way forward for us all over the coming years, in particular the prospects for the 2010 NPT Review Conference which will be a significant milestone. It is important that we make use of the 2010 NPT Review Conference to undertake substantive discussions on the three pillars of nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy and that, as a result, an agreement is reached that contributes to upholding and strengthening the NPT regime. Our hopes for the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee this year were that substantive discussions would be held on the three pillars and that these discussions would prove useful to the development of recommendations for the review conference which will be undertaken at next year’s Third Session of the Preparatory Committee. In both its general statement and its statements on specific issues, the Japanese delegation played a constructive role in the discussions, actively expressing Japan’s positions on such topics as the North Korean and Iranian nuclear issues; the implementation of practical nuclear disarmament measures, including further reductions in nuclear weapons with transparency by all nuclear-weapon states; the universalization of the IAEA Additional Protocol; and the importance of implementing the 3Ss in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The delegates to the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee held meaningful and substantive discussions, making progress based on the agenda adopted at the first session.
- (2) The Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which I

mentioned earlier, is expected to issue proposals aimed at achieving a successful outcome of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. With the disarmament and non-proliferation regime continuing to face numerous challenges, Japan is striving to identify policies that enable the international community to meet these challenges and believes that the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference should be an important target in achieving this outcome.

5. Japan's Position as the Only Country to Have Experienced the Devastation of Atomic Bombings

Mr. chairman,

- (1) Based on its determination that the horrors brought upon Hiroshima and Nagasaki should never be repeated, Japan has maintained its "Three Non-Nuclear Principles" and has made various diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons. Japan believes that steady implementation of practical nuclear disarmament measures on a step-by-step basis is a realistic way to achieve its policy goals and has used every opportunity to make contribution to this efforts. In particular, every year since 1994 Japan has submitted a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament to the UN General Assembly, thus consolidating the political will of the international community. The 2007 resolution, titled "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons," called for the universality of the NPT, the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty, and further nuclear disarmament by nuclear-weapon states. It was adopted by an overwhelming majority of 170 countries, including nuclear-weapon states. Meanwhile, at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference this spring, Japan submitted a working paper calling for increased transparency and illustrating items that nuclear-weapon states should disclose, such as the "number of reduced and deployed nuclear warheads and delivery systems".
- (2) To resolve the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, it is essential

to make untiring efforts over many years. From this viewpoint, we attach great importance to the role played by disarmament and non-proliferation education conducted from a long-term perspective in cooperation with civil society. In particular, Japan has a mission to impress upon the memory of humankind the terrible suffering and horrors caused by the atomic bombings, and we recognize that passing on such experiences and facts to future generations is important to bring about a peaceful world free of nuclear weapons. Each year since 1983 Japan has been inviting around 30 young diplomats from all over the world to Japan to allow them an opportunity to deepen exchanges with atomic bomb survivors through the UN Fellowship Program on Disarmament, conducted in cooperation with the UN. More than 650 diplomats have visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki so far.

On the occasion of the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Japan co-hosted the Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education Seminar with the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), the central theme of which was how to pass on the experience of the atomic bombings to future generations. As in 2007, Japan also issued a joint statement on this question with countries that have been working to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education. This year the number of countries taking part in the statement increased to 20. To achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, Japan is calling on countries to promote disarmament and non-proliferation education and to uphold the initiatives I have described with unremitting effort.

6. Conclusion

Mr. chairman,

In an international security environment that remains fraught with difficulty, and in a world where excessive number of nuclear weapons still exist, we welcome the positive moves that members of the international community are taking toward the elimination of nuclear weapons that I mentioned earlier. We must face the reality, however, that further practical efforts based on new

thinking are required to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. The success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference will be critical in this process; in order to increase momentum toward the Review Conference, we need to begin preparations to ensure the success of the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee next year. Amid continuing challenges to the NPT regime and assertions that it is faltering, we must give due recognition to the contribution that the NPT has made as the foundation of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime over the past 40 years, and undertake unstinting efforts to establish a new role for the NPT regime in the twenty-first century. Japan is committed to playing a leading role in ensuring the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and to continuing its steady efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.

