Press Release

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REPRESENTATIVE OF JAPAN
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 57TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee at this very important juncture. I am confident that, with the benefit of your diplomatic experience and skill, our deliberations will be most fruitful. You may be assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you lead the work of the Committee. I would also like to express my appreciation to Under-Secretary-General Jayantha Dhanapala for his excellent speech yesterday.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me begin by recalling the horrific September 11th terrorist attacks which posed extraordinary challenges to the international security situation. Unprecedented in scale, the attacks illustrated the increasingly international character of terrorist activities. The international community must take concerted action against international terrorism in order to address this growing threat. I would like to take this opportunity to express the solidarity of my country and its people with the United States of America and the entire international community as we pursue this common endeavor.

Since the events of September 11th, the international community has made significant progress in its fight against terrorism. But it must do more, and arms control and disarmament is one area in which greater efforts must be made. The initiative launched by the G8 at the Kananaskis Summit to prevent the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction has great relevance to the fight against terrorism. My country will contribute more than US $200 million for this initiative. We also commend the efforts made by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to upgrade worldwide protection against acts of terrorism involving nuclear and other radioactive materials. Japan has pledged to contribute US $500,000 to the special fund set up for the implementation of the IAEA "Action Plan for Protection against Nuclear Terrorism."

In addition to terrorism, unresolved regional conflicts, some threatening the security of the entire world, continue to cause human suffering. There is the fear that weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, may be used in these conflicts. Their resolution, therefore, remains a high priority for international peace and security.
With regard to the situation in Northeast Asia, the Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Junichiro Koizumi, recently visited the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) where he met with Chairman Kim Jong-Il. The two leaders signed the Pyongyang Declaration, in which both sides confirmed that, for an overall resolution of the nuclear issues on the Korean Peninsula, they would comply with all related international agreements. They also confirmed the necessity of resolving security problems including nuclear and missile issues by promoting dialogues among countries concerned.

I would also like to refer to the Iraqi issue. Iraq must comply with all the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. In particular, it must allow immediate and unconditional inspections and dispose of all weapons of mass destruction.

(Nuclear)

Mr. Chairman,

It is the fervent wish of Japan, as the only country to have experienced the devastation caused by nuclear bombs to see the realization of a safe, nuclear-weapon-free world. We believe that the most effective way to achieve this goal is through practical and concrete steps in nuclear disarmament. Japan highly values the signing of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions between Russia and the United States, and expects that this Treaty should serve as an important step toward nuclear disarmament efforts.

At the same time, we are gravely concerned about the obstacles to the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This Treaty represents a historic multilateral step toward nuclear disarmament and strengthens the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan has been doing its utmost, through bilateral contacts and multilateral means, to encourage non-signatories and non-ratifiers to accede to it. Last month, building on the achievements of the Article XIV Conference in November 2001, Japan, together with Australia and the Netherlands, took the initiative of issuing a joint ministerial statement on the CTBT. The three countries are inviting other countries to be included in the list of issuers; currently eighteen foreign ministers from all geographic regions are on the list. The statement will be forwarded to the Secretary-General to be circulated as an official document of the U.N. I would like to take this opportunity to call upon all States to join this meaningful statement. In addition, my country is fully cooperating with the Preparatory Committee of the CTBT Organization for the establishment of a verification system. Pending the entry into force of this Treaty, however, it is
imperative that the states concerned maintain the moratoria on nuclear-weapon-test explosions.

We are deeply disappointed at the six-year-long stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and its failure again this year to commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT). An FMCT would be a significant step for nuclear non-proliferation and an essential building block for further nuclear disarmament. Moreover, the strengthened control of nuclear materials under an FMCT will aid in the prevention of nuclear and radiological terrorism. For these reasons, negotiations should be commenced immediately, in accordance with the mandate that was agreed upon in 1995. A series of educational seminars which the Netherlands is currently conducting is benefiting all delegations in Geneva by preparing them for the negotiations once they begin.

The maintenance and strengthening of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime is essential in achieving a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is particularly important to promote the universality of the NPT and to ensure full compliance with the Treaty by all Member States. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the decision of Cuba to accede to this Treaty as well as to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean.

With the First Session of the Preparatory Committee in April a good start has been made in the NPT review process leading up to the 2005 Review Conference. I would like to stress the need for the implementation of the agreements contained in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference.

It is important to promote the universality of the additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement as an effective means to stem non-compliance. Japan organized a seminar for the Asian-Pacific region in June of last year and since then has been contributing to seminars held in Latin America, Central Asia and Africa. It will hold a conference for the same purpose in Tokyo this December.

Having assisted the efforts made by the regional States and the United Nations, Japan is particularly pleased that the negotiations on the text of the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty have been concluded. Japan looks forward to the signing of the Treaty in the near future.

Again this year, my delegation will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution entitled "A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons." We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority of Member States.
(Biological and Chemical)

Efforts to strengthen the Chemical Weapons Convention and to support the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons must be continued.

In order to address the threat of biological weapons, it is necessary to create a comprehensive strategy, with the Biological Weapons Convention as its most fundamental element. However, since the suspension last year of the BWC Review Conference, States Parties have yet to agree on a common ground to strengthen this multilateral convention. It is critical for the success of the Review Conference in November to agree on a follow-up mechanism addressing a focused agenda of certain key issues. We will continue to support the efforts by Ambassador Tibor Toth, President of the Conference, to bring about a convergence of positions.

(Missiles)

The international community must address the proliferation of ballistic missiles, which is increasingly a threat to international as well as regional peace and security. States must make genuine efforts to restrain and reduce missile activities, and to prevent their proliferation. Japan supports the universalization process of the International Code of Conduct. This process must establish a new norm that will truly contribute to preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

(Small Arms and Light Weapons)

The gravity of the problems of small arms and light weapons is all too well illustrated by the fact that these weapons cause more than ninety percent of all casualties in armed conflicts, or approximately 500,000 every year. The Programme of Action, adopted at the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects last July, is a historic landmark representing the collective will of the international community to address such problems. In the months since the Conference, Japan has been actively contributing to the implementation of this Programme. Earlier this year it held a meeting in Tokyo as a follow up to the UN Conference, and next January it will organize a seminar on the problems of small arms in the Pacific region. Another seminar will be held on the Asian region in February, with the cooperation of my government, the Government of Indonesia and the UN.

Assistance to those countries affected by small arms is essential, and the international community must combine its efforts to mobilize the available resources. Japan has been active in this area, too, by extending such assistance in cooperation with the United Nations and its Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. For
example, it sent research missions to Bougainville and Sri Lanka in cooperation with the U.N. DDA. Japan has also decided to support the UN activities on disarmament education in Cambodia in addition to the bilateral assistance for a weapons-for-development programme. Furthermore, we have recently begun a joint research programme with UNIDIR on arms collection projects in various countries. Japan will spare no effort to help affected countries in this area of urgent priority.

Japan attaches particular importance to the activities of the UN tracing study group which is aimed at studying the feasibility of an international instrument to prevent illicit trafficking in small arms. The objective of the First Biennial Meeting, to be held next year, will be to make the implementation of the Programme of Action more effective and efficient by exchanging lessons learned by States and international and regional organizations as well as NGOs. In this way it is hoped a solution to the problems will be found more quickly. Japan will also make a contribution to support the success of this Meeting.

At this point I should not fail to point out the gender aspect of the small arms issue. One of the extraordinary aspects of contemporary wars and conflicts is the large proportion of non-combatants among the victims. As a matter of fact, the greatest number of conflict-related deaths of women and children are caused by small arms.

(Other Conventional Weapon Issues)

This year, the UN Register of Conventional Arms is celebrating the tenth anniversary of its establishment by the joint initiative of the European Community and Japan. Since 1992 the Register has been playing a significant role in promoting transparency in armaments, and in order to enhance its universality, Japan has been co-organizing a series of regional workshops with Canada, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Nations. Another workshop is being planned in Indonesia next February for the Asia-Pacific region. I would like to take this opportunity to remind delegations that the 10th Anniversary Symposium will be held here in New York on the 15th of October with the cooperation of the aforementioned four countries and the United Nations. Ambassador Mitsuro Donowaki will make a keynote statement at this Symposium.

Japan has also been making vigorous efforts to enhance the universality of the Ottawa Convention, particularly in Asia and the Pacific. The seminar organized by the Government of Thailand this May provided an excellent opportunity to promote this Convention in the region. The next Meeting of States Parties will be held in Bangkok; it will be the first such Meeting to be convened in the Asia-Pacific region.
Japan will assist Thailand by serving as a co-rapporteur of the Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action Technologies.

In addition, we have been actively participating in the deliberations of the Group of Governmental Experts which was established at the Review Conference of the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention in December last year. Japan is eager to see a positive outcome of the Meeting of High Contracting Parties in December of this year on the issues of anti-vehicle mines and explosive remnants of war.

(Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education)

Education on disarmament and non-proliferation should be promoted at various levels. We have just received the report of the UN experts’ group on this issue and look forward to its implementation by Member States and relevant organizations.

My country has received as many as 400 participants in the U.N. Disarmament Fellowship Programme over the past twenty years. The Programme includes visits to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It enables junior diplomats, in particular, to gain a deeper understanding of different disarmament issues, and many former fellows are now diplomats active in this field. Japan will continue to support this worthwhile Programme.

(UN Regional Centres)

My country appreciates the activities of the three UN Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament. Having attended the UN Disarmament Conference held in Kyoto in August of this year, I believe that these activities should further be enhanced. They help us focus and conduct in-depth analyses of disarmament issues in relation to broader and urgent global problems which are the agenda of the United Nations.

(Multilateralism in Disarmament and Arms Control)

In the current international security environment, in which terrorism is a major threat, arms control and disarmament should be promoted at every level, including the bilateral and multilateral levels. The Moscow Treaty between Russia and the United States was a major bilateral achievement. The G8 also agreed on an initiative for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. All that is lacking now is progress in multilateral disarmament. It is urgently necessary to break the current stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament and to start substantive work toward that goal. During this year’s annual session, the CD witnessed a historic
cross-group effort, initiated by five distinguished ambassadors, to achieve agreement on a programme of work. The international community is eager to see, even during the closing period, some form of progress brought about through various efforts in Geneva as well as in the capitals of member States of the Conference.

(Conclusion)

Mr. Chairman,

Before concluding, I would like to stress the importance of addressing the root causes of the various threats to international peace and security, including terrorism and regional conflicts. From this viewpoint, it is important in post-conflict situations for the international community to cooperate for the structural prevention of the resurgence of conflicts, not only through disarmament and demobilization but also by promoting economic and social development, democratization and reconciliation. This approach will help to ensure a fundamental, long-term and comprehensive solution to security problems in volatile areas. I believe that it is an approach the international community must take in order to consolidate peace and stability around the world in the 21st century.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.