Regional issues

Mr. Chairman,

The importance of the NPT in strengthening regional security should be emphasized. It is necessary for States, when discussing effective implementation of the NPT, to consider the challenges of implementing the NPT in certain regions, such as the Middle East, South Asia, Iran, Libya and the DPRK.

1. Middle East

Mr. Chairman,

Lack of progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East poses a serious problem for the credibility of the NPT. Japan supported and continues to fully support the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which calls for the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction—nuclear, chemical and biological—and their delivery systems.

The adherence by all states in the region to the multilateral, legally binding instruments on the disarmament of weapons of mass destruction, such as the NPT, the BTWC, the CWC as well as the CTBT, will be essential towards this end. Japan has been actively taking part in the international efforts to encourage all concerned states to join these legal instruments.
I would also like to stress on this occasion that compliance with these legal instruments should be fully assured. In this regard, it is important that, during the most recent visit to Japan of the Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs from 24 to 27 August 2003, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Yonko Kavalov, once again urged him to become a party to the NPT. Japan continues to call upon Israel to accede to the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon state.

Japan is also committed to supporting the Middle East peace process, which is the key for regional stability. Such stability is a vital factor for realizing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the region. Japan will redouble its efforts to work with the Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the countries concerned, for resuming peace negotiations between the two sides, providing assistance for the Palestinians’ reform efforts and building confidence from a mid to long-term perspective.

2. South Asia

Mr. Chairman,

The nuclear weapon capabilities of both India and Pakistan make peace and stability in South Asia and beyond more vulnerable and precarious than before. In this regard, the implementation of Security Council Resolution 1172, adopted in June 1998, is of the utmost importance.

In the context of the NPT Review Process, we should maintain strenuous efforts to encourage India and Pakistan to positively respond to the calls contained in the relevant paragraphs on South Asia in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, by requiring the implementation of Resolution 1172.

While Japan welcomes the moratoria on nuclear testing by both countries and encourages them to continue further their commitment to these moratoria, Japan urges India and Pakistan to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states, as urged by UNSC Resolution 1172, and to sign and ratify the CTBT. We urge these two countries to give their utmost consideration to the problem of nuclear proliferation.

The revelation of nuclear related technology transfers by Dr. A. Q. Khan and his associates was a great shock to the international community. These transfers are one of the most serious challenges to the non-proliferation regime, and the DPRK has been included as one of the transfer destinations. As this is a problem directly related to the national security of Japan, it is of serious concern to the Government of Japan.

Japan urges Pakistan to take effective measures against non-proliferation, including strengthening a strict export control systems for nuclear related technology, materials and equipment. It is of great importance that the supply network of nuclear material, sensitive equipment and technology
revealed by the Government of Pakistan should be fully investigated in cooperation with the international organizations such as the IAEA.

3. Iran
Mr. Chairman,

Japan welcomes Iran’s recent positive moves, including the signing of the Additional Protocol. Japan also welcomes Iran’s recent active cooperation with the IAEA, such as the agreement of an Action Plan, which includes Iran’s provision to the IAEA of detailed information regarding aspects of its centrifuge program by the end of April as well as its declaration under the Additional Protocol by mid-May.

At the same time, Japan is deeply concerned about Iran’s past failures and breaches of its obligations under the Safeguards Agreement with respect to the reporting of nuclear activities, including uranium enrichment and plutonium separation activities. Japan also notes that there are still outstanding issues to be resolved and clarified.

Japan believes that it is essential for Iran to implement all the requests made by the IAEA Board in its resolutions of September and November 2003 and March 2004.

Japan expects and trusts that Iran will, in order to dispel international concerns, respond to all outstanding requests contained in those resolutions, speedily move to the ratification of the Additional Protocol, provide explanations that are acceptable to the IAEA regarding any outstanding issues, and continue and intensify its forward-looking cooperation with the IAEA, in particular through the prompt provision of detailed information, as requested by the IAEA.

4. Libya
Mr. Chairman,

Japan warmly welcomes Libya’s decision, announced 19 December 2003, to abandon all of its programs for weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). Japan also welcomes the signature of the IAEA Additional Protocol on 10 March as well as the subsequent series of actions taken by Libya in implementing its decision, including the ratification of the CTBT. Japan strongly hopes that Libya will ratify the Additional Protocol soon and, until then, will cooperate with the IAEA based upon the provisions of the Additional Protocol.

These decisions and the subsequent actions taken by Libya should be regarded as a significant step forward in facilitating Libya’s reintegration into the international community and for the promotion of disarmament and nonproliferation of WMDs, as such weapons pose a major threat to the peace and
stability of the international community. They are also in line with Japan's policy of pursuing universal acceptance of international agreements on the banning and limitation of WMDs. Libya's decisions and actions should be welcomed as developments that will contribute to strengthening stability in the Middle East and also to ensuring global peace and stability.

The fact that Libya had been engaged in undeclared nuclear activities related to nuclear weapons programs over an extended period of time is a serious concern for the international community. Japan would like to express its deep concerns regarding the supply network of nuclear material, sensitive equipment and technology that enabled Libya to carry out such a plan. Japan hopes that the IAEA's verification activities will continue to move forward with full cooperation from Libya in order to ensure that the IAEA can confirm the completeness and correctness of the declaration and further expose the supply network.

It is the strong hope of Japan that the DPRK and those states that are subject to suspicion for developing WMDs will follow Libya's example.

5. DPRK

Mr. Chairman,

The early and peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue is essential for securing peace and stability in Northeast Asia, including Japan. The issue is also a matter of grave concern from the viewpoint of strengthening and universalizing the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

We have to express our deep regret that, in spite of a series of relevant IAEA resolutions, the DPRK has not accepted comprehensive IAEA safeguards and has been refusing to cooperate with the IAEA in their implementation.

Japan cannot accept, by any means, any development, acquisition, possession, test or transfer of nuclear weapons by the DPRK. We also strongly urge the DPRK to observe all the international agreements related to nuclear issues, including the NPT, and to implement completely and immediately the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. First of all, the DPRK must completely disclose information related to all its nuclear programs, including its uranium enrichment program, and dismantle expeditiously all its nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner. In addition, it is extremely important for parties, including the DPRK, to agree promptly on a verification regime that includes complete and fully intrusive inspections, with due regard to the importance of maintaining a central role of the IAEA in the verification process. In this regard, the proposal of a "freeze" by the DPRK needs to be defined as a first step towards denuclearization in the Korean Peninsula, as just mentioned.
Japan firmly believes that the DPRK nuclear issue has to be solved peacefully. The decision by Libya to eliminate its weapons of mass destruction programs and its cooperative attitude regarding its implementation is an extremely welcome development, especially in connection with the DPRK nuclear issue. We highly appreciate this development. In order to peacefully solve the DPRK nuclear issue through dialogue, as in the case of Libya, Japan is determined to make every effort, primarily by actively contributing to the Six-Party Talks.

To achieve peace and stability in Northeast Asia, relations between the DPRK and those countries concerned, including Japan, should be improved through the comprehensive solution of various concerns, including the issues between Japan and the DPRK. Further developments will depend on steps to be taken by the DPRK. The DPRK is now required to make a prompt decision, responding to the demands of the international community.

6. CTBT
Mr Chairman,

I would like to emphasize a few essential points on the CTBT, as representative of Japan (and also from the viewpoint of the Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO this year).

First and foremost, the CTBT is a landmark Treaty in the history of nuclear disarmament in that it renders illegal all types of nuclear testing. It thus contributes to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. The commitment by all to achieve the entry into force of the CTBT is an integral part of the package to allow the indefinite extension of the NPT. Thus, it is indeed regrettable that, seven years after the adoption of the Treaty, and after the 2000 NPT Review Conference agreed upon it as the first practical step for nuclear disarmament, the CTBT has not yet entered into force and no definite date of entry into force is foreseen.

Secondly, we should not be overly disheartened by the current status. Thanks to the efforts made by many, including the successive Article XIV Conferences, the Preparatory Commission of the CTBT, the Executive Secretary of the FTS and Ministerial Meeting of Friends of the CTBT, the CTBT has now attained the goal of universality, with 171 signatory and 112 ratifying states. The past twelve months alone saw the achievement of four more signatories and 13 more ratifiers. Very few international agreements have attracted so many signatories and ratifiers. As to the goal of entry into force, the number of Annex II countries whose ratification is required for entry into force has been reduced from 44 to 12, after the completion of the ratification process by Algeria.

Thirdly, we should recognize that the CTBT is alive and growing strong. With overwhelming and universal support representing the strong desire by all, the ban on all types of nuclear tests is now well established as the international norm. Nuclear tests by any will be strongly condemned by the
international community. Thus, the CTBT is alive as a strong deterrent against nuclear testing, even before its entry into force.

The Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO has been promoting the steady build-up of the extensive international monitoring system, and the preparatory phase of the first system-wide performance test will be carried out this year. The verification system of the CTBT makes it extremely difficult to conduct nuclear testing without being detected, functioning as an added deterrent against nuclear testing. Thus, the build-up of the CTBT verification system provides confidence-building measures on: nuclear test ban, even prior to its entry into force. It should also be emphasized that the build-up of the verification system not only helps many developing countries to promote their capacity to monitor and detect testing, but also to obtain civilian and scientific use and benefits of such technology.

Lastly, I would like to summarize three essential steps we should take.

1. It is crucial that we maintain and strengthen our efforts to promote early entry into force. We should concentrate our political efforts on urging the nine remaining Annex II countries who have signed to complete the ratification process as early as possible. We should also work on the three Annex II countries that have neither signed nor ratified to sign and ratify the Treaty as early as possible. We are encouraged by serious efforts being made by some governments to complete ratification. Japan will initiate consultations with other interested governments to hold a Ministerial Meeting of the Friends of the CTBT during the forthcoming session of the UNGA to raise political momentum.

2. It is very important to maintain the moratorium on nuclear explosions pending the entry into force of the Treaty, although the moratorium will not replace the CTBT. Japan strongly urges all states not to carry out nuclear-weapon-test explosions or any other nuclear explosions at any place and to refrain from acts that would defeat the object and purpose of the Treaty before it enters into force.

3. The CTBT has a crucial role to play in the strengthening of the NPT regime. Japan would like to see that 2005 NPT Review Conference reaffirm the validity of the importance and urgency of the entry into force of the CTBT and insist on the special responsibility of the remaining Annex II countries to act without delay.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.