Statement by H.E. Mr. Sumio TARUI

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at
the First Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference

Nuclear Disarmament and Security Assurances

Vienna, 9 May 2007
Mr. Chairman,

In the discussions in Cluster 1, I delivered Japan's basic position on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. During this Special Time, along with our statement on specific measures for nuclear disarmament, we would like to put forward our basic position on security assurances.

1. Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. Chairman,

As we expressed during the general debate and in our Cluster 1 statement, the past outcomes including those of 1995 and 2000 must be respected to their fullest possible extent. Firstly, the nuclear-weapon States need to take further measures leading to nuclear disarmament, as agreed to under article VI of the NPT, such as deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons, while respecting the "unequivocal undertaking": they committed themselves to in 2000 to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. Japan welcomes the steady progress by the nuclear-weapon States, including the United States and the Russian Federation, in reducing their nuclear arsenals. Nevertheless, while an estimated 27,000 nuclear weapons still remain in existence, it is patently clear that further concrete efforts to reduce nuclear arsenals are required. Japan urges the Russian Federation and the United States to implement fully the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (SORT), and to undertake nuclear arms reductions beyond those provided for in the Treaty in an irreversible and verifiable manner. From this perspective, Japan is paying close attention to the talks between the Russia Federation and the U.S. concerning the fate of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). Furthermore, it is vital that these efforts to reduce nuclear weapons progress transparently. In this connection, we welcome in the discussions of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) the presentations based on solid figures from some nuclear-weapon States on their nuclear disarmament measures. Japan strongly encourages all the nuclear-weapon States to give due attention to greater transparency in nuclear disarmament.

Next, the nuclear-weapon States should further lower the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security. Additionally, diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies minimizes the risk that they will ever be used, and is indispensable for promoting the process of their total elimination.

Mr. Chairman,

To realize the complete elimination of nuclear arms it is necessary to halt the manufacture of such weapons. In this regard, both a qualitative and quantitative cap are essential and significant. In relation to a qualitative cap, the prompt entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a realistic issue. All the countries that have yet to sign or ratify the CTBT should do so without delay. As the Fifth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT will be held in
September this year, Japan intends to heighten the momentum for the prompt entry into force of the treaty in support of this Conference. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, we urge states to maintain the moratorium on nuclear test explosion. Japan once again condemns the 9 October nuclear test by the DPRK. In this respect, efforts towards the establishment of a verification system for the nuclear test ban including the International Monitoring System (IMS), which demonstrated its effectiveness on the occasion of the DPRK test, are also vital.

If the CTBT is the key measure to cap qualitatively the manufacture of nuclear weapons, then the quantitative cap is a fissile material cut off treaty (FMCT). This means that at present an FMCT is the most practical multilateral measure for nuclear disarmament. In this connection, the proposed presidential draft decision of the Six CD Presidents, which aims to overcome the decade long impasse and get the Conference back to substantive work, is a realistic and carefully worded compromise. For advancing nuclear disarmament, which is the objective of all NPT States Parties, we cannot miss this opportunity; instead, we must immediately adopt this draft decision. In addition, until the negotiations on an FMCT are concluded and such a treaty enters into force, Japan urges all the nuclear-weapon States and non-NPT States Parties to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

2. Security assurances

Mr. Chairman,

In relation to security assurances, at the time of signing the NPT in 1976, Japan stated that “nuclear-weapon States must not have recourse to use of nuclear weapons or threaten to use such weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States”. As demonstrated by this statement, Japan has basically supported the idea of negative security assurances (NSAs) from the beginning.

This year the CD carried out focused discussions on NSAs. What was made clear through the discussions of the first part of this year was that all the nuclear-weapon States reaffirmed the provision of negative security assurances to the level stipulated in United Nations Security Council Resolution 984. This should be commended.

Furthermore, it was also made clear that no nuclear-weapon State is opposed to the idea of granting negative security assurances through nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties. Ensuring the effectiveness of existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, including working towards their entry into force, is important as a practical and realistic step for NSAs. In this regard, it has been reported that ASEAN foreign ministers will convene a meeting in Manila this July to review the Bangkok Treaty and to draft a protocol which the nuclear-weapon States would be able to sign on to. We welcome such efforts. We hope that the prompt signing and ratification of the protocol by all nuclear-weapon States can be realized through such consultations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.