



(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. YOSHIKI MINE
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 61ST SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY GENERAL DEBATE

10 OCTOBER 2006
NEW YORK

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,

(Nuclear disarmament)

After the entry into force of the NPT, the United States and the Russian Federation started to engage in the limitation and reduction of the nuclear weapons. It is, however, estimated that, according to some unofficial data, about 16,000 nuclear weapons still remain. We recall that states are encouraged to take further steps leading to nuclear disarmament under article VI of the NPT. Japan commends the efforts by the United States and the Russian Federation, to reduce nuclear arsenals in accordance with the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (the Moscow Treaty) and encourages them to undertake nuclear arms reductions beyond those provided for by the treaty stressing the importance of the principles of irreversibility, verifiability, and increased transparency. In this context, Japan will pay close attention to the consultations between the US and Russia on START, which expires in 2009. We hope the other nuclear weapon states will make similar or further efforts in the reduction of nuclear arsenals according to their commitments made at the 1995 and 2000 NPT Review Conferences.

The nuclear weapon states should further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security. In addition, diminishing the role of nuclear weapons in security policies is essential to minimizing the risk that these weapons will ever be used, and to facilitate the process of their total elimination.

Universalization of the NPT is equally important. Japan appeals to the non-NPT states who possess nuclear weapons to accede to it as non-nuclear weapon States without delay and without conditions.

(FMCT; a significant measure for disarmament)

An FMCT is the most realistic logical step for the next multilateral legal disarmament measure. An FMCT is often described primarily as a non-proliferation issue. Nevertheless, under an FMCT, states possessing fissile material for nuclear weapons would be, at a minimum, obligated to cap fissile material production, which is not an explicit legal obligation for the nuclear weapon states under the NPT. Consequently, regardless of the treatment of existing stocks, an FMCT would provide the effect of irreversibility since states possessing fissile material for nuclear weapons will no longer be permitted to produce such material. Only such capping can lead to the reduction and subsequent elimination of fissile material for nuclear weapons. Therefore, an FMCT is significant as a nuclear disarmament measure, which would enhance the disarmament aspect of the NPT.

In the focused debates at the CD this year, discussions on all aspects of an FMCT, including definition, scope, stocks and verification, took place, almost fully exhausting the time allocated in the formal and informal meetings. Furthermore, although there exists a range of opinions from the perspective of the whole CD schedule, it is a significant fact that throughout the CD session this year no opposition was expressed from any country, including the nuclear weapon states, to the establishment itself of an ad hoc committee for negotiating an FMCT in the CD. I would like to re-emphasize here what I concluded in my statement to one of the final meetings of the CD; that is while further deliberations are required within the CD on all of 4 major agenda items, only an FMCT has reached the stage of establishing an ad hoc committee for negotiations. Japan would like to once again call for the immediate commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the CD.

(DPRK)

Madam Chairperson,

The DPRK announced on 9 October that it had conducted a nuclear test and a relevant authority in Japan detected a seismic wave with an abnormal wave pattern. This act by the DPRK, combined with DPRK's buildup of ballistic missiles that may be capable of delivering Weapons of Mass Destruction, is a grave problem and raises extremely deep concern. This is a serious challenge to Japan's security, and is totally unacceptable. Japan firmly protests against the DPRK and categorically denounces its act.

The nuclear test by the DPRK poses a grave threat to the peace and security not only of Japan, but also of East Asia and the entire international community. This constitutes a serious challenge to the NPT regime, and is not only in violation of Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration and the Joint Statement by the Six Party Talks, but also disregarding the spirit of UN Security Council resolution 1695 and the Presidential Statement of the Security Council dated October 7th this year.

For this reason, Japan has proposed this issue in the UNSC on 9 October and addressed it in this First Committee together with the rest of the UN members. As a member state of the UN, the DPRK is obliged to faithfully implement the UN Security Council resolution 1695. Japan once again strongly demands the DPRK to fully implement the Joint Statement by the Six-Party Talks, in which the DPRK committed itself to

abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and to returning, at an early date, to the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

(Iran)

In relation to the issue of Iran's nuclear programme, the confidence of the international community, which is a fundamental requirement when conducting sensitive nuclear activities such as enrichment and reprocessing, has not been restored. Japan strongly urges Iran to comply fully with the UN Security Council Resolution 1696 by promptly suspending all enrichment-related activities, and return to the negotiation process.

(Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia)

Madam Chairperson,

As Japan has long supported the efforts for negotiation of the treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia, Japan regards the signing on 8 September of this Treaty in Semipalatinsk by the five central Asian countries, as an effort to strengthen the peace and stability of the region as well as nuclear non-proliferation. At the same time, as stipulated in the principles and guidelines of the 1999 UNDC report, it is important that the nuclear-weapon states are consulted during the negotiations of each treaty and its relevant protocols establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone, in order to facilitate their signature to and ratification of the relevant protocol(s) to the treaty. In this regard, Japan takes note of the expressed readiness of the five central Asian countries to continue consultations on some points of the Treaty. Japan will pay close attention to the future consultations among the countries concerned so that it will be ensured that the Treaty would contribute to the peace and stability of the region.

(Japan's resolution on nuclear disarmament)

Finally, I would like to introduce the draft resolution on nuclear disarmament which will be submitted to the First Committee by Japan. Last year, we redrafted our previous resolution in stronger yet more concise terms. This resolution entitled "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons" was not only adopted by 168 countries, the highest number of countries since its submission, but also gained broad support from countries of differing positions. This demonstrates that despite the "two failures" at both the NPT Review Conference and the UN Summit of last year there exists a common ground in the international community on specific guidance in promoting nuclear disarmament. This year, in addition to text emphasizing the importance of next year's new NPT review process, language was also added calling for the immediate commencement of substantive work to its fullest at the CD considering this year's positive development as well as expressing deep concern over the statement by the DPRK in which it stated that the DPRK had conducted a nuclear test. Japan hopes that all countries, including the nuclear-weapon States, regardless of any differences in position, will unite and support our resolution with a view to achieving the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Thank you.