



(Please check against delivery)

STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. SUMIO TARUI
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 63rd SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
NUCLEAR WEAPONS

13 OCTOBER 2008
NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

In the field of nuclear weapons, which is the theme of this thematic debate, it has become discernable to many that a revitalization of discussions on the total elimination of nuclear weapons is occurring within the international community. Although there are a number of emerging challenges – or some would say a stalemate – on the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation agenda, there is also a growing international momentum for a new initiative in this area. For instance, the now famous *Wall Street Journal* articles by former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and other prominent U.S. public figures, as well as a similar appeal issued recently by former British Foreign Secretary Sir Malcolm Rifkind and others, have refocused attention on the idea of a nuclear-weapons-free world. This newfound interest has inspired fresh activities, such as the recent International Conference on Nuclear Disarmament in Oslo co-sponsored by the Norwegian government.

The International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which was established under the Joint Initiative of the Prime Ministers of Japan and Australia, follows this trend. The Commission, which will be co-chaired by Ms Yoriko Kawaguchi, former Japanese foreign minister, and Mr. Gareth Evans, former Australian foreign minister, shall deal with nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and is expected to submit a report before the 2010 NPT Review Conference, with a view to contributing to its success. The Government of Japan together with the Government of Australia will assist the Commission in the facilitation of its work.

Mr. Chairman

Based on the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan has committed itself to the goal of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons. In an effort to introduce our ideas on practical steps to accomplishing this goal, Japan will submit again this year a draft nuclear disarmament resolution to the First Committee entitled, "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons". I would like to recall that last year, an overwhelming majority – 170 countries, the highest number since its first submission, including nuclear-weapon States – again adopted this resolution in the General Assembly.

Reducing the number of existing nuclear weapons, which currently totals an estimated 26,000 to 27,000 warheads, is the first priority of the international community. In this regard, it is important that at this year's G8 Summit in Hokkaido Toyako, for the first time in the history of the G8, which includes four nuclear-weapon States among its members, the Leaders' Declaration called upon all nuclear-weapon States to undertake reductions of nuclear weapons in a transparent manner. For example, the recent French announcement to reduce its total nuclear stockpile to fewer than 300 warheads, the first such case by a nuclear-weapon State, as well as its invitation to international experts to visit its military fissile materials production facilities, is a good example of transparency. Our draft resolution reinforces the message of transparent reductions, while welcoming the steady progress the nuclear-weapon States have already made in cutting their arsenals. In this vein, it is important for 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 welcomes the U.S.-Russia Strategic Framework Declaration in which the two countries reiterated their intention to carry out strategic offensive reductions to the lowest level consistent with their national security requirements and alliance commitments. We strongly encourage the Russian Federation and the U.S. to complete successfully the negotiations for a legally binding instrument that will be the successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START).

Mr. Chairman,

For reducing nuclear stockpiles, first you must stop producing fissile material – the key ingredient of nuclear weapons. We would like to point out that in the discussions of the Conference on Disarmament (CD), no delegation expressed opposition to negotiations on the prohibition of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Document

CD/1840, which was submitted to the CD by this year's six Presidents, states the clear objective of negotiating such a ban, but does not in anyway prejudice the outcome of negotiations. Thus, CD/1840 allows each Member State to freely pursue their respective positions and priorities, and to submit proposals on any issue they deem relevant in the course of negotiations. Japan strongly calls for the commencement of negotiations on an FMCT in the CD without delay through the adoption of CD/1840.

In the process of realizing a world free of nuclear weapons, preventing their development is also vital. Therefore, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is a very high priority. The nuclear test proclaimed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in October 2006 underlined the clear necessity of the CTBT. In this connection, it is critical that we work vigorously to promote the early entry into force of CTBT, particularly in the lead up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference. It is encouraging that after Colombia's ratification in January 2008, the number of Annex 2 States that have yet to ratify the Treaty only counts nine. We again strongly urge the countries that have yet to sign and/or ratify the CTBT, especially the nine remaining Annex 2 States, to do so without delay. In addition, pending the entry into force of the Treaty it is important for the nuclear-weapon States and States that are not party to the NPT to respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions. India's recent commitment to uphold its moratorium on testing can only be seen as progress in this respect.

As a measure to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war until the total elimination of nuclear weapons is realized, we call for the nuclear-weapon States to further reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons systems in ways that promote international stability and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The vehicle that could carry us to a peaceful and secure world free from nuclear weapons does not move without the other tire – nuclear non-proliferation. It is obvious that the maintenance of nuclear non-proliferation is also extremely important as a condition to further advance nuclear disarmament. Here I would like to touch upon the nuclear issues of the DPRK and Iran as regional and international proliferation problems that require particular focused efforts.

[The nuclear development by the DPRK is a threat to the peace and security of not only Japan, but also of East Asia and the entire international community, and represents a serious challenge to the NPT regime. An agreement has recently been reached between the U.S and the DPRK on a series

of verification measures. Japan regards it extremely important to establish a concrete framework of verification in order to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which is the objective of the Six-Party Talks. Japan will continue to work actively in order to adopt without delay a document at the Six-Party Talks regarding the concrete framework of verification based on the agreement between the U.S and the DPRK. Allow me to emphasize that we are committed to achieving a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issues within the framework of the Six-Party Talks.]

Iran has regrettably continued, and even expanded, its uranium enrichment-related activities in defiance of calls by the international community. In order to remove the concerns of the international community and to regain its confidence, Iran has to fully cooperate with the IAEA and respond sincerely to the requirements set forth by the relevant resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors and the UN Security Council. Japan continues to work towards a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the issue in concert with the international community.

Mr. Chairman,

In the general debate, I mentioned that we are facing ups and downs in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation, and political will has to be shown by all countries to further the cause in this area. Japan's resolution "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons" maps out one of the roads for tackling this issue. There is now a greater need than ever before for the international community to cooperate in order to follow this road step-by-step with the resolute political will that is so plainly required.

Thank you.