



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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United Nations Disarmament Commission
2008 annual session

Statement by H. E. Ambassador Takahiro Shinyo,
Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
(General exchange of views)

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Ambassador de Klerk, most warmly on your assumption of the chairmanship of the 2008 session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). This year's session, under your chairmanship, is extremely important because we must conclude the discussions of the current three-year cycle and reach a consensus on recommendations on substantive matters. I can assure you, Mr. Chairman, of the full support of Japan in your endeavors. Furthermore, we would like to commend the immense efforts by the chairpersons of the two Working Groups on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

The UNDC can look back at an impressive record of achievements. In 1992, the UNDC issued guidelines and recommendations for objective information on military matters. In 1993, it reached agreement on guidelines for regional approaches to disarmament within the context of global security, and then in 1996, for international arms transfers. Moreover, in 1999, consensus was achieved on two sets of guidelines concerning the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free-zones and conventional arms control.

In recent years, however, we have seen little outcome from the UNDC. In 2003, we were unable to reach agreement in the field of both nuclear disarmament and conventional weapons. We must make the necessary efforts to break through this current situation. Through each country demonstrating its utmost flexibility, we strongly hope that the UNDC will be able to successfully adopt recommendations.

Mr. Chairman,

As the only country that suffered the devastation of atomic bombs, Japan seeks a peaceful world free from nuclear weapons to create a better international security environment. To this end, it is vital for the whole world to share a vision of “a world free of nuclear weapons”, by overcoming the differences in position of the nuclear-weapon States and the non-nuclear-weapon States. With such a vision, our annual UN General Assembly resolution, entitled “Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons”, is consistently adopted by an overwhelming majority. This resolution demonstrates Japan’s strong belief that we should build upon practical and concrete measures for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Taking this into account, Japan appreciates that there has recently been a surge in debate on practical measures toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

For step-by-step progress toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons, maintaining and strengthening the disarmament and non-proliferation regime is of critical importance. However, the NPT, which is the cornerstone of that regime, is facing a grave challenge, amongst others, from the danger of NPT non-nuclear-weapon States covertly developing nuclear weapons under the cover of the right to peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

In this context, I must highlight the importance of the international community collectively tackling the challenges facing the NPT regime. At the same time, I must also highlight the importance of ensuring the complete universality of the NPT. For the success of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, Japan greatly hopes

that further meaningful and substantive discussions will be conducted at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee. These discussions should be based on the outcome of the First Preparatory Committee, chaired by Ambassador Amano of Japan.

For the purpose of enhancing the credibility of the NPT, it is also important for all the nuclear-weapon States to faithfully implement their Article VI nuclear disarmament obligations. In that connection, while welcoming the nuclear disarmament efforts of the United States and the Russian Federation, including the significant reduction in the U.S. nuclear weapons stockpile, Japan hopes for an early agreement on a successor framework for START. We also welcome the recent unilateral nuclear disarmament measures announced by the United Kingdom and France. Japan seeks greater transparency from all the nuclear-weapon States on nuclear disarmament efforts, and in that regard, we appreciate the detailed presentations given by some nuclear-weapon States. Additionally, we call on all nuclear-weapon States to make further irreversible and verifiable reductions.

Mr. Chairman,

The early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is also imperative. It was heartening, therefore, that with the recent ratification of Colombia, the number of Annex II States that have yet to ratify has now fallen into the single digits. Japan will continue to call for the ratification of the CTBT by all states, and expects that the moratorium on nuclear test explosions will be maintained pending the Treaty's entry into force.

Mr. Chairman,

The Conference on Disarmament (CD) is the international community's single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum; nonetheless, the CD has been deadlocked for over a decade. This is an extremely regrettable situation. In recent years, the CD has conducted important substantive discussions, in

particular on the four core issues, and a proposal tabled by the six presidents of 2008 (CD/1840) is now under consideration. Japan calls on all the CD Member States to reach agreement on a programme of work and commence negotiations on a disarmament treaty.

Now let me turn our attention to each of the CD's four core issues. Firstly concerning nuclear disarmament, I would like to emphasize the necessity for all the nuclear-weapon States to fulfill their strong commitment to Article VI nuclear disarmament.

In relation to the important nuclear disarmament measure of a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT), which will set a quantitative cap on nuclear weapons, it became even more apparent in the CD deliberations of 2006 and 2007 that conditions were sufficiently ripe for the commencement of negotiations. Japan strongly appeals to all member States to commence negotiations on an FMCT without delay. Furthermore, we urge all the nuclear-weapon States and non-NPT State Parties to declare a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices pending the entry into force of a treaty.

In relation to the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), Japan is ready to examine and discuss all the various issues surrounding PAROS, including the draft "Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space" (PPWT). Additionally, Japan in principle supports the idea of negative security assurances (NSAs) and will actively contribute to further discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

As one approach from among the many and diverse viewpoints necessary for tackling conventional weapons, which are actually causing the most destruction on a day-to-day basis, I must mention the necessity of building confidence amongst states. From this perspective, Japan is extremely pleased that the UN

Register of Conventional Arms which is based on our 1991 UN General Assembly resolution “Transparency in Armaments” has become established as one of the important international systems for promoting confidence-building among States. More than 15 years after the establishment of this system, I still cannot emphasize enough the danger of expansion in armaments through distrust among States as well as the importance of preventing this danger.

Japan believes that the UN Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) is the most important international framework for tackling the illicit trade in SALW, and confidence-building among states contributes to eradication of the illicit trade. At the 2006 Group of Government Experts Meeting on the UN Register of Conventional Arms, a voluntary registration form for SALW was created, and it is expected that efforts related to the Arms Register and the PoA will have a synergistic effect in the future. Furthermore, taking into consideration that 500,000 people fall victim to small arms every year, the implementation of the PoA must be strengthened continually. From this perspective, in March last year Japan held the Tokyo Workshop on Small Arms and Light Weapons, in which participants shared best practices related to efforts on SALW and discussed transfer controls, amongst other issues. Additionally, Japan, in cooperation with Colombia and South Africa, submits annually a resolution entitled “The illicit trade in small arms and light weapon in all its aspects”, and promotes the strengthening of efforts on small arms in UN forums. Japan will be actively working toward the success of the Biennial Meeting of States, which will be held this July based on last year’s resolution.

An Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) is intimately related to building confidence in the field of conventional weapons since it aims to guarantee the responsible transfer of arms and will create a common standard for such transfers. This year the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) meetings on an ATT have been held. Japan is participating in its deliberations and making proactive contributions to enable meaningful discussion. As a matter of principle, Japan does not export weapons and has maintained this policy for more than 60 years. We sincerely

hope for a more peaceful world, and it is with this spirit that we intend to vigorously contribute to the discussions on an ATT.

Mr. Chairman,

This year Japan holds the presidency of the G8 and Japan will be hosting the G8 Summit in Toyako, Hokkaido in July. The G3 Hokkaido Toyako Summit will raise as one of its main themes the issue of the non-proliferation of WMDs. Japan envisions a strong G8 message toward strengthening the international non-proliferation regime.

Additionally, Japan will be hosting the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) this year. As peace is a basic prerequisite for development, Japan has consistently focused on the reconstruction and rehabilitation of countries. Strengthening our efforts on disarmament is critical for peace consolidation. Moreover, as the UN Secretary-General pointed out, by freeing up resources that would have been diverted to armaments, these resources can then be used for economic development, including the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Japan is energetically cooperating for the maintenance, rehabilitation and building of global peace, and aims to be a "Peace Fostering Nation."

I thank you for your attention.