

Statement by Mr. SHICHIJO Akira

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At the Forty-ninth General Conference of the

International Atomic Energy Agency

1. Opening Address

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to congratulate you on your election as President of the 49th General Conference of the International Atomic Energy Agency. I am convinced that your extensive experience and outstanding abilities in steering the proceedings of international conferences will contribute to the success of this General Conference. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Belize as a new member of the IAEA.

Mr. President, Mr. Director General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The role of the IAEA in non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy has become increasingly important year after year. In this context, Japan highly appreciates the leading role played by Dr. ElBaradei, who has contributed to the development of the IAEA in the past 8 years of his two terms of office as Director General. Japan warmly congratulates him on his re-election as the Director General for the next term.

2. Strengthening of Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime

Mr. President,

The Year 2005 is the 60th anniversary of the first use of nuclear weapons in the history of mankind. However, the threat of nuclear weapons is not an old story that has gone away. The international nuclear non-proliferation regime is currently facing a number of serious challenges. The

DPRK nuclear issue has become even more critical, underground networks of nuclear materials and weapons have come to light, and the risk of the proliferation of nuclear weapons or material among non-state actors such as terrorists has grown. Therefore, the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime is one of the most important and urgent issues for the international community to address.

In this context, it was at least encouraging that there were no countries that cast doubts on the importance of the NPT in the Review Conference held in New York last May, although regrettably the Conference could not adopt any consensus document on the substantive issues. The international community is now required to strongly renew its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Japan, as the only country that has ever suffered the tragedy of atomic bombings, will never abandon its "Three Non-nuclear Principles" of “not possessing, not producing and not permitting the introduction of nuclear weapons into Japan”. This year, the 60th anniversary of the atomic bombings, Japan is renewing its determination to continue its active participation in international efforts towards disarmament and non-proliferation.

The IAEA is the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. It is the responsibility of the entire international community to strengthen the regime by closing any loopholes in the current regime, and the IAEA has a significant role to play in this process. In this context, current discussions about restrictions on the transfer of equipment and technology of enrichment and reprocessing and Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle (MNA) are motivated to prevent the proliferation of

sensitive nuclear technology, and Japan fully shares this recognition. Japan continues to actively participate in discussions on these initiatives. Japan, however, believes that the discussion on MNA needs to carefully consider how it can contribute to strengthening of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and whether it will not unduly affect the peaceful uses of nuclear energy by non-nuclear weapon States that carry out nuclear activities with the confidence of the international community by faithfully fulfilling their NPT obligations and by ensuring high transparency of their nuclear activities.

The strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system is vital to reinforcing the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan continues to make the utmost efforts towards the universalization of the Additional Protocol, which we believe to be the most realistic and effective means of achieving this objective. To this end, Japan has been

conducting active outreach activities, mainly in the Asian region, such as the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-proliferation (ASTOP). Further, Japanese experts will participate in a seminar on promoting the Additional Protocol to be held in Australia this coming October.

The Additional Protocol has now been brought into force in half of the IAEA Member States. This is a significant step forward and indicates an acceleration of the universalization process. I urge those States that have not yet concluded an Additional Protocol to do so as soon as possible. In this context, Japan attaches great importance on the activities of the Committee on Safeguards and Verification, which the Board of Governors decided to establish last June.

In Japan, integrated safeguards has been implemented since September last year. Japan will continuously

cooperate fully with the IAEA in its strict implementation of safeguards, which hopefully will serve as a useful example to other States. We believe that integrated safeguards is beneficial for the efficient use of the limited resources of the IAEA. I hope that integrated safeguards will be applied to more States through further efforts of both the IAEA and those States with a good track record in safeguards.

3. Nuclear Issues of the DPRK and Iran

Mr. President,

In order for any State to exercise its right of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, it is a precondition to secure the transparency of its nuclear activities through the faithful implementation of the IAEA safeguards, and to win the confidence of the international community.

The DPRK's nuclear programs, which have been

conducted without accepting the IAEA safeguards, pose a serious challenge to the international nuclear non-proliferation regime underpinned by the NPT and the IAEA. The international community as a whole needs to resolve this issue urgently in a peaceful manner. Japan welcomes the fact that, at the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks, an agreement was reached on the joint statement that indicates the final goal to be achieved by the Talks, and that the DPRK committed, in this joint statement, to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs. These significant achievements are the first steps towards peaceful resolution of the DPRK's nuclear issues. Japan believes that it is important for the six parties to implement this agreement promptly and steadily, and in particular, to promote constructive dialogues continuously to reach a concrete agreement on particularities such as specific procedures for the dismantlement and details of verification measures.

As for the Iranian nuclear issue, a Board of Governors resolution was adopted on 24 September with the support of many Board Members, in which the Board, among others, finds Iran's non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement, and calls on Iran to further cooperate with the IAEA and to re-establish the suspension of all enrichment-related and reprocessing activities. This resolution sends a clear message of the international community to Iran, and Japan values this as an important step towards resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue through continued negotiations. Japan strongly urges Iran to take this resolution seriously and respond to it sincerely. Japan further renews its call for Iran to sincerely implement all the requirements of the relevant resolutions of the IAEA Board of Governors, and to return to the negotiating process with the EU3.

4. Nuclear Security

Mr. President,

Since the tragic events of September 11th 2001 in the United States, the threat of nuclear terrorism has become an important issue that the international community needs to address. In order to prevent nuclear weapons and nuclear or radioactive material from falling into the hands of terrorists, it is essential that the international community tackle the nuclear security issue through close cooperation and coordination.

From this viewpoint, Japan welcomes the adoption of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism at the General Assembly of the United Nations in April this year, and the adoption of the amendment of the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material at the diplomatic conference in Vienna in July this year. Japan highly values both

conventions, and sees them as a clear sign of the determined attitude of the international community to strengthen counter measures against nuclear terrorism. Japan has just signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, and is conducting an intensive study for the early conclusion of both conventions for the purpose of their early entry into force. I would like to urge all States to make the utmost efforts towards the early conclusion and implementation of these conventions.

Japan will continue to make the most of the Nuclear Security Fund, and is planning to host an IAEA seminar in Tokyo next year to improve nuclear security measures in the Asia-Pacific region.

The control of radioactive sources is also very important. I would like to call on all States to enhance their

commitment to the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources, and the Guidance on the Import and Export of Radioactive Sources.

5. Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

Mr. President, Mr. Director General, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear power, an energy source that is not only stable in supply but also contributes to the prevention of global warming, is becoming increasingly important in today's world. It goes without saying, that radiological applications in fields such as medical treatment, agriculture and industry are extremely beneficial for the social and economic development of the international community.

The role of the IAEA in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is also significant. Particular importance is attached

on technical cooperation with developing countries to promote applications of isotopes and radiation in various fields. Japan is one of the few Member States that have continuously contributed 100% of its share of the IAEA Technical Cooperation Fund. We strongly encourage all Member States to pay their share of the Technical Cooperation Fund in full and without delay. We also urge recipient countries to fulfill their shared responsibilities.

Japan has been making a significant contribution to regional-level activities of the RCA. Furthermore, Japan will host the ministerial-level meeting of “Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia” in Tokyo next December.

Nuclear power is one of the main power sources in Japan. Japan has continued to develop a nuclear fuel cycle in order to enhance the advantages of power generation by nuclear energy while ensuring high transparency. We are currently preparing a new "Policy Framework of Nuclear

Energy", which describes our fundamental goals, common principles and basic view points regarding our nuclear policy for the next 10 year period. In the Framework, the nuclear fuel cycle is to be developed, confirming Japan's long standing policy.

Since the last General Conference, there have been several significant steps made in Japan's activities in this area, such as the commencement of the uranium test in the reprocessing facility at Rokkasho and the commencement of the improvement work at FBR "Monju". Japan will continue to develop its nuclear fuel cycle, ensuring safety as the precondition.

It is also important to consider nuclear energy in the long term. The ITER project, which aims at the energy utilization of nuclear fusion, made firm steps forward this year. Japan became what could be called the sub-host country as an important nuclear fusion energy research

center. We are determined to accomplish our role through close cooperation with other parties.

6. Nuclear Safety

To promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, ensuring safety is the fundamental precondition. We will do our best to continue to improve our record in nuclear safety. Japan recognizes international cooperation in the field of nuclear safety to be very important. We also highly value the IAEA's activities in nuclear safety and Japan will continue to make a positive contribution in this field.

7. Transport of Radioactive Material

Mr. President,

The smooth transport of radioactive materials is essential for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In particular, international transport of radioactive materials is based upon the right of freedom of navigation established under

international law. In conducting such transport, Japan employs the most stringent safety measures in accordance with the international standards set by the relevant international organizations and has an excellent 30-year track record in transport safety. At the same time, Japan is willing to continue dialogue between shipping states and coastal states in order to build up mutual confidence.

Furthermore, Japan will receive a TranSAS mission this year to evaluate our safety regulatory practices in transport of radioactive materials.

8. IAEA Budget and Personnel Affairs

Mr. President,

Sufficient financial support is necessary for the IAEA to play its expected role. To this end, Japan has supported the Fiscal Year 2006 regular budget, including the increased safeguards budget. However, I would like to call on the Secretariat to continue its efforts towards improving

efficiency in budget management through the prioritization of projects and reduction of costs. I would also like to request the Secretariat to cooperate with Japan in increasing the number of Japanese staff at the IAEA.

9. Closing Remarks

Mr. President,

With many important issues accumulating, the role of the IAEA has attracted more attention and expectation. I would like to conclude my address by reiterating Japan's commitment to continuing its active contribution to the IAEA so that the IAEA can fulfill its noble mission.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.