

Statement by H.E. Mr. Goshi HOSONO,
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Head of Delegation of Japan
at the 55th General Conference of the IAEA
19 September 2011

1. Introduction

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

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Feruta, on your election as President of the 55th General Conference of the IAEA. I would also like to welcome the Kingdom of Commonwealth of Dominica, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and Kingdom of Tonga as new members.

Mr. President,

The accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant of TEPCO (Tokyo Electric Power Company) was triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake and its resulting tsunamis. It caused grave damage to Japan. Japan succeeded in nuclear power generation for the first time in 1963. Since then, for nearly half a century, Japan, as a nation lacking rich energy resources, has made great efforts for R&D in the area of safe and secure uses of nuclear power. It eventually managed to develop its nuclear technologies and industries. This accident took place in the course of such steps, and has caused a serious shock to the Japanese people. Japan is now moving forward to restoration

from the accident. Taking this opportunity, I would like to once again extend our deepest appreciation to the other Member States, the IAEA and other organizations for their assistance and solidarity.

Japan would also like to extend its high appreciation to the leadership demonstrated by the Director General Amano. He leads international efforts for putting into practice lessons learned from the accident for enhanced nuclear safety and strengthened nuclear security. These efforts are pursued through supporting information provision about the accident, dispatching IAEA Monitoring Teams as well as International Fact-Finding Expert Mission. They also include paying a visit by the Director General himself to the plant, and preparing a draft of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety which the Board approved last week.

It is our commitment to achieving the earliest possible settlement of the accident, investigating its cause and sharing with the international community lessons learned from such endeavor. We will reflect these lessons upon the IAEA's efforts for further strengthening nuclear safety. Japan will make every effort for the implementation of the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety.

Mr. President,

Having said that, the IAEA also tackles global issues such as nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, especially on regional nuclear issues, as well as wider application of radiation technology. I would like to emphasize that the IAEA has a particular role in these priority agenda. I strongly hope that the IAEA, by fulfilling its overall duties, will lead our steps towards the creation of safer nuclear future.

2. Towards the Creation of Safer Nuclear Future

(1) Nuclear Safety and Nuclear Security

Mr. President,

The Ministerial Declaration adopted at the IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety in June stressed the need of Japan to continue to provide information on the accident. Japan itself believes that it is important to do so swiftly and accurately. With this in mind, the Government of Japan has submitted to the IAEA last week an additional report on the progress after the June report.

In this connection, I would like to extend our invitation to you to our briefing session on the additional report to be held at 4:30pm today. Your participation is most welcome.

Mr. President,

Our efforts towards stabilization of the nuclear reactors and spent fuel pools are essentially sustained by the dedication of on-site workers. They engage in emergency duties every day under harsh conditions. It is also important to note that international cooperation, including the provision of advice and equipment such as radioactive water treatment system and remote control robots, are great help for our works.

Thanks to these invaluable contributions, the situation at the plant is moving steadily towards restoration. The Government, together with TEPCO, makes its utmost efforts to achieve the Step 2 of our “Roadmap”, a goal that release of radioactive materials from the plant is under control and radiation dose is being significantly held down. We will move up the existing target period, and endeavor to achieve this, cold shutdown, by the end of this year.

At present, nuclear reactors are moving towards this cold shutdown status benefiting from the installation of the circulating water injection cooling system which recycles the processed high-level radioactive water. In addition, spent fuel pools already reached stable cooling condition. The Government takes responsibility of improving conditions for on-site workers in radiation management and health care. Furthermore, it engages in training of experts in conjunction with operators in view of mid- and long-term challenges. It also continues to work on these challenges such as the removal of the spent fuels. We expect that there will arise many more difficult challenges. But I am convinced that Japan can overcome these challenges, thanks to strenuous efforts of on-site workers and warm support from the international community.

Mr. President,

In its June report, Japan made it clear, as one of the lessons, the need to upgrade its administrative structure for nuclear safety regulation. The June Ministerial Declaration as well as the September Action Plan mentioned strengthening of the power of national regulatory authorities and ensuring its effective independence.

Taking these international discussions into account, Japan has decided to carry out an organizational reform on its nuclear safety regulation. In order to fully achieve “separation of authorities for regulation and promotion”, Japan will aim to create “Nuclear Safety and Security Agency” in April next year as an external body of the Ministry of Environment, separating the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency from the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and at the same time integrating the Nuclear Safety Commission. This new agency will unify nuclear regulation authorities. It will boost safety culture. And it will put in place enhanced crisis management system. Moreover, Japan is determined to further work to fundamentally

strengthen nuclear safety regulations themselves. As it implements this reform, Japan will be ready to receive the IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service in 2012.

This new agency will also be in charge of nuclear security. Japan will bring forward its work on nuclear security, taking into consideration relevant IAEA documents and lessons learned from the accident. It will also continue to tackle measures against terrorist attack at nuclear facilities and information exchange with foreign authorities. Capacity building utilizing the “Integrated Support Center for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Nuclear Security” will continue. Through these efforts, Japan believes that it will be able to contribute to the success of the Nuclear Security Summit in March next year.

Mr. President,

Off-site responses are important, too, and are mentioned in the Action Plan on Nuclear Safety. In order to make the most of international expertise, Japan is going to receive the IAEA decontamination mission in October. In cooperation with the IAEA, Japan will conduct its decontamination work, benefiting from knowledge of in- and outside Japan. Japan is also conducting health check on local residents as a first priority.

Mr. President,

In the course of discussion for the September Action Plan, Japan proposed the strengthening and promotion of IAEA Safety Standards and an expanded role of the IAEA safety assessment missions including enhanced peer review. They were eventually incorporated into twelve main actions. Japan will make every effort to implement these actions.

Japan, together with the IAEA, will co-host a high-level conference in 2012, as mentioned in the preamble of the Action

Plan. Through this initiative, we would like to share with the international community the result of our comprehensive review on nuclear power plants and direction of nuclear safety measures.

(2) Efforts of Japan and the IAEA towards a “World without Nuclear Weapons”, Efforts to resolve regional nuclear issues, and Contribution to the strengthening of nuclear non-proliferation regime

Mr. President,

The IAEA is the only international organization which has expertise in all aspects of nuclear energy, not limited to nuclear safety and security. We should not loosen our effort to support such IAEA’s roles.

From this perspective, Japan will convene a third Foreign Ministerial meeting of NPDI (Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative), taking the opportunity of the UN General Assembly. This aims to further promote the implementation of the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Japan will continue to lead international efforts towards “a world without nuclear weapons”.

As for the implementation of nuclear disarmament, United States and Russia agreed to control and dispose certain weapon-grade plutonium no longer needed for military purposes and are preparing for irreversibly placing them under IAEA’s verification. Japan welcomes such move. We hope the other nuclear weapon states will follow suit.

Mr. President,

North Korean nuclear issue is a threat to peace and security in the East Asia and for the international community as

a whole. It is also a serious challenge to the NPT regime. The North Korean uranium enrichment program is a clear violation of the UN Security Council Resolutions and Joint Statement of the Six Party Talks. It is important for the international community to continue to strongly urge North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons as stipulated in the Security Council Resolutions. In this regard, Japan welcomes the comprehensive report on North Korean nuclear issue which the IAEA Director General submitted to the September Board.

Mr. President,

As regards the Iranian nuclear issue, it is indispensable for Iran to remove all the suspicions from the international community and to win its confidence. Japan will continue to act in concert with the international community for peaceful and diplomatic settlement of this issue.

Concerning the Syrian nuclear issue, Japan strongly hopes that Syria will fully cooperate with the IAEA and that the relevant facts will be clarified.

Moreover, Japan highly appreciates the efforts made by the Director General Amano towards the realization of the Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East scheduled in November. I trust that this will contribute significantly to convening a conference in 2012 on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

With a view to effectively addressing proliferation concerns including these issues, we welcome that the number of states with additional protocols in force increased from 102 to 110 in the past one year. Japan also welcomes that this fact demonstrates that a safeguards agreement and an additional protocol based on their respective models are becoming the international safeguards

standard.

Japan continues to support other members' and the IAEA's non-proliferation efforts. It hosts meetings of the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-proliferation, and provides cooperation for the IAEA activities for promoting the entry-into-force of additional protocols and assistance for enhancing analytical capability of the IAEA laboratories.

(3) Response to Global Issues through IAEA Technical Cooperation
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Mr. President,

Japan values that the IAEA tackles global issues, such as water shortage and delay in cancer therapy in developing countries, by applying nuclear technologies. Japan contributes to such IAEA activities by sending hydrology experts to Scientific Forum this year, coordinating cooperation between Asian regional frameworks in the areas such as radiology, and conducting maritime environmental monitoring projects.

In the fiscal year of 2011, on top of its contributions to the Technical Cooperation Fund, Japan decided to make special contributions to the IAEA in the total amount of more than 12 million dollars, including 3.5 million for the Peaceful Uses Initiative. With this special contribution, we will further extend support for IAEA projects in both areas of power generation and non-power generation.

(4) Human Resources Development of Nuclear Experts
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Mr. President,

To formulate safer nuclear future, it is essential to train nuclear experts who underpin such vision. Last November, Japan set up nuclear human resource development network in this regard. It will also consider the creation of the “International Nuclear Safety Training Academy”. Its scope includes upgrading experts’ skills, fostering international cooperation making the most of lessons learnt from the accident, as well as promoting international development of new safety regulation infrastructure. Through these efforts, Japan will work on nurturing capable experts in cooperation with the IAEA.

3. Concluding Remarks

Mr. President,

Today, the IAEA provides advice to governments in order to further strengthen nuclear safety and security. It also plays a central role in various international efforts. The Agency contributes to enhancing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime by utilizing its detection and analysis expertise on nuclear material. It supports developing countries on infrastructure development using radioactive technology, and promotes safe application of nuclear energy. Japan will continue to uphold the expanding role of the IAEA, together with other Member States.

The accident took place in Japan this time. But I am convinced that we will definitely overcome this challenge and find a path towards safer nuclear future, benefiting from lessons learned and wisdom of the world. With this belief in mind and cooperating with the IAEA and other countries, Japan is resolved to fulfill its responsibility.

Thank you for your attention.