

**Statement by Mr. Ryuji YAMANE,
Parliamentary Senior Vice–Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Head of Delegation of Japan
at the 56th General Conference of the IAEA
17 September 2012**

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

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to congratulate you, H.E. Mr. Barros Oreiro, on your election as President of the 56th General Conference of the IAEA. I would also like to welcome the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, the Republic of Fiji and the Republic of San Marino as new members.

Mr. President,

One year and a half has passed since the occurrence of the grave damage triggered by the Great East Japan Earthquake and its resulting tsunamis, and of the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station (NPS) of Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). The Government of Japan is continuing with efforts, including decontamination, towards restoration of the stricken areas in close cooperation with authorities and residents in those areas. The Fukushima NPS achieved the cold shutdown, and is steadily taking long-term steps forward towards the decommissioning of its reactors. We express our gratitude once again for great support and assistance provided from the international community to date.

The IAEA has coherently supported our efforts to disseminate the accident-related information, use lessons derived from the accident for enhanced global nuclear safety and security. At the same time, the IAEA, pivotal in the nuclear non-proliferation system, has been working decisively for resolution of the regional nuclear issues. For instance, last November the IAEA hosted the Forum on Experience of Possible Relevance to the Creation of a Nuclear Weapons-Free Zone in the Middle East to contribute to confidence-building efforts by the States concerned. Moreover, we recognize that all these activities of the IAEA have been financed from the budget, the growth of which has been curtailed with its efforts to seek clear priorities of the projects as well as efficiency gain through the in-house organizational restructure.

We believe that such recognition as above is widely shared among the IAEA member states. Japan, as one of those, extend its high appreciation to the leadership demonstrated by Director General Amano. Japan will continue to cooperate with, and assist the IAEA in its efforts to further strengthen safety, security and safeguards for peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Mr. President,

This General Conference is the first anniversary of the establishment of the IAEA

Nuclear Safety Action Plan in the previous Conference. In order to discuss progress made in the efforts by the international community for implementation of this Action Plan, and to further share lessons and knowledge derived from the accident at Fukushima NPS, Japan is organizing “the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety” in Fukushima Prefecture this coming December in co-sponsorship with the IAEA. We expect high-level participation in this Conference from as many member states and associated organizations as possible.

In this connection, we would like to explain about some of the major steps we have taken to contribute to progress in the Action Plan.

First of all, we have fully shared information and knowledge about the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident with the international community. It is, we trust, an important basis for strengthening international nuclear safety. Specifically, Japan, as its contribution to the international expert group meetings or on other occasions, has shared with the international community information on safety of nuclear reactors and spent fuel pools as well as impact of earthquakes and tsunamis, based on the most advanced technical capabilities. Japan also shared information on the results of the IAEA international mission on remediation received in October of last year, the IAEA review mission on the stress test received in January of this year, and the IAEA mission to examine the performance in Japan after the earthquake and tsunamis received in July of this year.

Secondly, Japan decided to strengthen the national nuclear regulatory authority. “Nuclear Regulation Authority” is scheduled to be established on 19 September as a new independent regulatory authority to be fully separated from the nuclear promotional authorities, and to integrate the existing regulatory authorities for “3S”, namely Safety, Security and Safeguards, into one.

Furthermore, Japan has dedicated its efforts to strengthening the existing legal frameworks on nuclear safety, such as proposing the strengthening of the operation of the Nuclear Safety Convention as well as the strengthening of the RANET (Response and Assistance Network) under which each member state can register with the IAEA in advance as to its possible assistance at the occurrence of a nuclear accident.

In addition to these efforts, Japan has made extra-budgetary contributions in the total amount of about 13 million euro to assist the IAEA in its efforts for implementing the Action Plan, conducting its projects towards recovery from the Fukushima accident, and others.

The implementation of the Action Plan has made steady progress to date through the efforts to date by member states, the IAEA Secretariat and others. Japan will continue to work, in cooperation with the IAEA Secretariat, to address on-going challenges such as the strengthening the IAEA Safety Standards and capacity building for states concerned. In this connection, Japan welcomes that Director General Amano expressed his intention to make a comprehensive report in 2014 on lessons learned from the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident. Japan will actively cooperate on this effort.

As part of our further information sharing efforts, we would like to extend our invitation

to you to our side event for briefing on the status of efforts after the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident, to be held at Austria Center (Hall E2) this afternoon (4:30pm). Your participation is most welcome.

Mr. President,

Regarding the strengthening nuclear security, the Government of Japan amended the relevant national regulations to reflect into national practice the most updated recommendations on physical protection contained in the IAEA INFCIRC/225/Rev.5 document, together with lessons derived from the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident in the area of nuclear security. In addition, the current regulatory work on nuclear security and general coordination function will be integrated into the newly established Nuclear Regulation Authority, by which our administrative system for nuclear security will be fundamentally strengthened.

At the same time, Japan will, for its contribution to the strengthening of global nuclear security, continue to endeavor to provide further assistance to developing countries through activities of the “Integrated Support Center for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Nuclear Security” and others, in concert with the IAEA Secretariat and other countries. Japan appreciates the IAEA efforts for promotion of the entry-into-force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Japan recognizes that this Amendment will bring important changes to global nuclear security, and so will make necessary efforts.

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 these IAEA roles.

From this perspective, Japan attaches importance to the steady implementation of the Action Plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, in concert with the IAEA and others. In this connection, Japan welcomes the ongoing efforts by the United States and Russia towards control and disposal of certain weapon-grade plutonium and operation of the IAEA verification. We expect similar efforts of the other nuclear weapon states.

The IAEA safeguards are playing a key role in the nuclear non-proliferation regime. To improve its effectiveness and efficiency, years of constant efforts by the international community are indispensable. As part of the outcome of such international efforts, the number of states with additional protocols in force increased from 110 to 117 for the past one year. Japan welcomes this steady progress, and believes that this very fact demonstrates that a comprehensive safeguards agreement and an additional protocol based on their respective models are becoming an international safeguards standard.

From this viewpoint, Japan will further contribute to efforts for universalization of the additional protocol in concert with other members and the IAEA Secretariat. Japan will continue to be active in these efforts by utilizing opportunities including the meeting of the Asian Senior-level Talks on Non-proliferation, outreach to states concerned in concert with the IAEA,

and other various multilateral frameworks.

Mr. President,

When we turn our eyes to the regional nuclear issues, they are remaining to be settled and the pressing challenge to the international community. The IAEA, carrying out its mission among others to prevent diversion to military uses of nuclear energy, has been playing more and more important roles in those issues in the light of nuclear non-proliferation regime

The nuclear issue of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is a threat to the peace and security in East Asia and the entire international community. Its uranium enrichment programme constitutes a clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. Japan hopes that the IAEA continues to play a critical role in resolving the DPRK's nuclear issue. As the international community clearly stated in the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, the DPRK can never have the status of a nuclear-weapon state. Japan once again urges the DPRK to immediately take concrete actions toward denuclearization, emphasizing that it is only through sincerely implementing the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes that the DPRK can gain international confidence.

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.

Mr. President,

I have so far touched upon nuclear safety and security, and safeguards. We are convinced that promotion by the IAEA of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy in a manner to ensure those three pillars is sure to benefit all its member states.

Japan provides support to the IAEA technical cooperation with priority. As part of our action in this regard, Japan will make a contribution to the IAEA in the amount of 3.5 million US dollar in this fiscal year in addition to the contribution made in the fiscal year of 2011 in order for the IAEA to address the priority challenges in the developing countries through "the IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative".

In addition Japan will continue to contribute to the promotion of technical cooperation in the areas such as radiological science through the frameworks including "Forum for Nuclear Cooperation in Asia", researches on nuclear science and technology, and "Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology".

For those contributions, assistance to the development of human resources is indispensable. Japan will endeavor, in concert with the IAEA Secretariat, enable promising youth and others to be more active in the Secretariat. In June of this year, the IAEA Management School sponsored by Japan through its extra-budgetary contribution to the IAEA was held in Tokaimura to train young experts in the world. We will continue to cooperate for training nuclear experts and holding a school of this sort.

Mr. President,

Having experienced the accident at the Fukushima NPS, Japan has been reviewing from scratch its national energy policy, building upon nation-wide discussions, for aiming at the mid to long term energy mix that will be able to assure the public. As a result, the Energy and Environment Council of the Japanese Government formulated, on 14 September, the “Innovative Strategy for Energy and the Environment”. The Strategy’s basic policy is to reduce the dependence on nuclear energy as well as on fossil fuels through the maximization of green energy. This Strategy, while utilizing nuclear power reactors, the safety of which is confirmed, as an important source of electricity, aims at utilizing all policy resources including the maximization of green energy development, so that zero operation of nuclear power reactors will be possible in the 2030’s. This is a target for the use and expansion of green energy and others.

On the other hand, the way forward towards the realization of a society not dependent on nuclear power is not necessarily a way straight forward but a long one. Since it is extremely difficult to accurately foresee the international situation of energy and others in the future, it is necessary to maintain a humble attitude and to be prepared to flexibly respond to any possible changes. The Government will therefore verify and constantly review, in the light of such matters as the impact on people’s lives and economic activities, the status of expansion of green energy, the status of understanding and cooperation of the international community and others.

Furthermore, during this process as well, ensuring nuclear safety is the absolute priority, and the development of human resources and technology on nuclear energy is essential. From this viewpoint, the Strategy for maintaining and strengthening human resources and technology will be developed by the end of this year as a responsibility of the Government.

As a responsible country where this nuclear accident took place, taking fully into account lessons learned from this accident, with a view to enhancing safety in peaceful uses of nuclear energy through the worldwide efforts, Japan will continue to remain in concert and cooperate with the international community. Japan is resolved to definitely overcome the challenge which this historic accident posed for us by benefiting widely from wisdom of the world. Japan will endeavor, by obtaining cooperation from the IAEA and other countries, to be able to ensure the world highest level safety and security for peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and also to further secure your confidence in that there is no nuclear proliferation concern in and by Japan.

Thank you for your attention.