

Statement by Mr. Koji Omi
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Delegate of the Government of Japan
at the Forty-fifth General Conference of the
International Atomic Energy Agency

Mr. President,

We are gathered here today to discuss how we might work together to achieve IAEA's ultimate objective of bringing peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Last week, however, peace and security of the civilized world was violently challenged when terrorists launched heinous attacks in the United States, killing innocent citizens. I should like to express sincere condolences to the victims and bereaved families.

I happened to be in Boston at the time of the tragedy and was promptly instructed by Prime Minister to go to New York. I witnessed the consequences of the evil deed. The terrorist attacks pose a grave challenge to the people not only in the United States but also people all over the world, and can never be forgiven. We must stand firmly together with fellows all over the world to fight against terrorism. Various international fora will be discussing how to counter the

threat of terrorism; I believe that the IAEA can make meaningful contribution in this respect.

Mr. President,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I offer you my heartiest congratulations on your election as President of the 45th General Conference of the IAEA. I am convinced that your rich experience and able leadership will make this General Conference highly successful. I extend a hearty welcome also to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Republic of Botswana that have newly become members of the IAEA.

Mr. President,

I also wish to offer my sincere congratulation to Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei on his reappointment as Director General of the Agency, and express my best wishes for the success of his second term.

Mr. President,

Given the scarcity of its domestic energy resources, Japan has actively promoted the peaceful use of nuclear energy as a stable source of energy in the course of the economic

development. I am certain that its importance for Japan will increase in the years ahead. We have to recognize that the nuclear energy, which has brought economic blessings to mankind, has also been used to create nuclear weapons. Japan is the only country to have suffered the damage of atomic bombs, which is at the heart of national longing for total elimination of nuclear weapons. This is reflected on the Three Non-nuclear Weapon Principles, my government's standing policy of utmost importance, which dictates that Japan must not possess, produce, nor permit the importation of nuclear weapons. This is the reason why Japan decided to join the NPT in 1976 after much heated national debate. It is therefore my government's solid policy to support the IAEA, which bears such a heavy responsibility of verification, a key element in this nuclear non-proliferation regime. I am convinced that the Agency will fulfill its lofty mission and promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy under the leadership of Director General Mohamed ElBaradei.

Mr. President,

I believe that, from the perspectives of stable supply of energy and preservation of global environment, promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy is an important agenda for the entire world community. Japan has 51 commercial

nuclear reactors in operation, which account for about 35% of the nation's total power generation, and plans to make additional 13 reactors operational by 2010. This is expected to increase the reliance on nuclear power generation to over 40%. We are also preparing ourselves for the future by advancing the research and development of Fast Reactors and light water reactor use of plutonium, as was outlined in Japan's Long-Term Program for Nuclear Energy in the 21st century. Japan will continue to make steady progress toward establishment of nuclear fuel cycle such as MOX project. There are two reasons why Japan is promoting utilization of nuclear energy. First, since Japan is heavily dependent on imported oil from abroad, nuclear energy contributes to stable energy supply. Second, nuclear energy has enormous merit from the perspective of global environmental consideration. Japan will continue to make its use of plutonium transparent.

There are under progress many research and development activities of nuclear fusion as a new source of energy to follow nuclear fission, with a prospect of its practical application during the course of this century. ITER, the most prominent example, is a cooperative project among Japan, European Union and Russia. It is important that ITER should succeed through wider international cooperation. In this respect, it is desirable that the US rejoins ITER.

Mr. President,

In the light of present international situation, enhancement of the nuclear non-proliferation regime is one of the most important agenda for the international community today. It is my conviction that strengthening the NPT regime is the most realistic option. That is why Japan promptly concluded the Additional Protocol, which has the effect of strengthening safeguards for nuclear non-proliferation. Japan also proposed during the last General Conference a Plan of Action to promote conclusion of additional protocols by many states which have not yet done so.

Based on the Plan of Action and in cooperation with the Agency, Japan organized in June the “International Symposium for Further Reinforcement of IAEA Safeguards in the Asia-Pacific Region”. The symposium succeeded in deepening the understanding of participants on the issue of universalization of the Additional Protocol. I hope that the Agency will hold similar events in other parts of the world. I also call upon Member States to promptly conclude Additional Protocols through implementation of the Plan of Action. Japan remains willing to cooperate with the IAEA in both human resource and financial terms.

As was stated in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference last year, early adoption of Integrated Safeguards will rationalize the burden of safeguards and should prove to be an important incentive for concluding the Additional Protocol. Japan urges the Secretariat to accelerate its work on substantiating the concept of Integrated Safeguards.

Mr. President,

From the perspective of security in Northeast Asia, the Agency's role in the context of suspected nuclear weapons development by North Korea is a grave one. In order that we may arrive at a realistic solution on this matter, Japan will continue to actively support efforts by the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) to implement the Light-Water Reactor Project smoothly and expeditiously. I urge North Korea to improve its relationship with the Agency and to comply with its obligation under the safeguard agreement promptly and completely.

Mr. President,

Ensuring nuclear safety is among the important missions of the IAEA. The Government of Japan welcomes the recent appointment of Mr. Tomihiro Taniguchi as the Agency's

Deputy Director General in charge of nuclear safety. He has extensive experience in this field. Japan looks forward to continuing its contribution to the activities of the Agency through providing qualified personnel.

Japan recognizes that ensuring nuclear safety is an urgent task, particularly in Asia, where 23 nuclear reactors are currently under construction. In order to fulfill this objective, I consider it very important to train persons with expertise in nuclear safety and to establish new safety standards, among many other safety issues. In order for the IAEA to play an even more significant role in the area of nuclear safety, the Government of Japan remains ready to assist the Agency with financial and human resources.

The management and disposal of radioactive waste is a common challenge that many countries currently face. In response to this challenge, the Government of Japan intends to make a new extra-budgetary contribution to the Agency this year.

Mr. President,

Japan follows a basic policy of calling upon all international organizations to attain a “zero nominal growth budget” to encourage efficient fiscal management. I urge the

Secretariat to achieve further cost reductions in all operations and set priorities based upon the one-house principle of the IAEA.

Japan also believes that one way of meeting the financial challenge is to achieve cost neutrality of safeguards budget through increased efficiency of its implementation. I call upon the Secretariat to present a concrete plan in this direction.

Mr. President,

In the previous century, mankind acquired nuclear energy with unlimited possibility and power of destruction. Whether the nuclear energy remains a true promise lighting the future of the world, or turns out to be an ominous knowledge leading us all to total destruction depend wholly upon the wisdom of the human race. I have faith in human wisdom and am convinced that we will choose the right path. That is a reason enough for us to join our efforts through the Agency. It is incumbent upon the international community to make every effort to ensure that the Agency is able to fulfill its mission. Japan remains committed to providing all the support it can to that end.

Thank you.