

Japan - Statement by H.E. Mr. Yukio Hatoyama, Prime Minister of Japan, at the UN Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President Obama for his timely initiative to hold this meeting.

Moral responsibility as the only country that has ever experienced atomic bombings

On August 6th and 9th this year, I visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and spoke in person with atomic bomb survivors and their second and third generation descendants. I could not help feeling choked with emotion at the fact that just two atomic bombs claimed more than 200 thousand lives and, seeing people who still suffer from the after-effects of radiation over 60 years after the bombings. I would like to encourage all leaders of the world to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and absorb with their own eyes and ears the cruelty of nuclear weapons.

As a matter of historical fact, Japan chose not to possess nuclear weapons even after achieving its postwar reconstruction. In 1970, Japan signed the Treaty of the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and ratified it six years later. In 1996, Japan signed the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and ratified it a year later.

Why has Japan chosen to walk a non-nuclear path when it has the potential to develop nuclear arms? Japan is the only country that has suffered from atomic bombings. However, Japan has chosen this path to prevent the vicious cycle of a nuclear arms race. Japan made this choice because it saw moral responsibility in doing so as the only victim of nuclear bombings. Each time neighboring countries take further steps in nuclear development, some suspect that Japan might want to go nuclear. It is only because they do not understand our firm determination not to acquire nuclear weapons and to fulfill our responsibility to act as the state to have suffered from atomic bombings. I hereby renew Japan's firm commitment to the Three Non-Nuclear Principles. Collaboration towards a "world without nuclear weapons"

However, it is not sufficient for Japan to just renounce the possession of nuclear weapons.

Despite our wish for the elimination of nuclear weapons, nuclear-weapon-holding states still possess a large amount nuclear arsenal, and the world remains under the threat of nuclear proliferation. It is the harsh reality that efforts for nuclear non-proliferation have come to a critical moment in the face of challenges such as the nuclear issue of the DPRK and Iran, and the risk of terrorists acquiring nuclear material and technology. Thus Japan should take the lead in the pursuit of the elimination of nuclear weapons.

The vision for a "world without nuclear weapons" proposed by President Obama this April has encouraged and inspired people around the world. It is high time for us to take action.

First, Japan calls upon nuclear-weapon-holding states to reduce their nuclear arsenals. Progress in ensuring transparency and in disclosing information would enable confidence building, creating a virtuous cycle for further nuclear disarmament. The creation of a nuclear weapon free zone, when coordinated between the five nuclear-weapon States (P5) and non-nuclear-weapon States in the region would also contribute to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and consequently to global and regional peace and security as stated in today's resolution.

Second, Japan strongly encourages the early entry into force of the CTBT and the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT). I recall that a Japanese fishing boat named Daigo Fukuryu Maru encountered the hydrogen bomb testing in the Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific on March 4th in 1954. Freezing the capability of nuclear "haves" to produce nuclear weapons by an FMCT would contribute to both nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. It also constitutes an indispensable measure to make the NPT regime more universally equitable. We have no time to waste.

Third, Japan itself will engage in active diplomacy to lead international efforts in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. For example, Japan will submit a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament to the UN General Assembly, support the activities of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament co-chaired by Madame Kawaguchi of Japan and Mr. Evans of Australia, and promote efforts to strengthen the skills, expertise, and resources of the IAEA. I wish to express my respect for the role played by IAEA Director General Elbaradei. I also wish to express my trusted confidence in and strong support for the soon to be new Director General, Ambassador Amano.

Fourth, Japan will take resolute response to nuclear proliferation activities. The DPRK's nuclear development poses a grave threat to the peace and security of Japan and the international community, and must not be tolerated. Japan will take necessary measures to implement the UN Security Council resolution 1874 more effectively. Japan is also concerned about the nuclear issue of Iran. In this regard, the UN Security Council plays an increasingly important role, and Japan calls for the strengthening of the Council. Furthermore Japan will contribute to the Nuclear Security Summit to be held next year.

Fifth, as stated in the resolution adopted today, it is necessary to reduce the risk of proliferation and to adhere to the highest level of standard in each area of nuclear safeguards, security and safety, when using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Conclusion

The period up to the NPT Review Conference in May next year will be critically important in testing the ability of the international community to take pragmatic steps forward towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. All the nations of the world,

with or without nuclear weapons, have the responsibility to take action towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you very much.