Press Release

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STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. YOSHIKI MINE

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HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 59TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Cluster Debate: Nuclear Weapons

18 October 2004, New York
1. Strengthening of the Nuclear Disarmament and Non-proliferation Regime

Recent challenges to the NPT regime, such as non-compliance and the proliferation of nuclear-related technology through underground nuclear proliferation networks, have highlighted the urgency for further efforts on the part of States Parties in maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime.

The early peaceful resolution of the DPRK nuclear issue is essential for securing peace and stability in Northeast Asia, including Japan, and also for strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. Japan cannot accept, under any circumstances, any development, acquisition, possession, test or transfer of nuclear weapons by the DPRK. We continue to call on the DPRK to ensure complete dismantlement of all its nuclear programs under credible and international verification. The DPRK should observe all the international agreements related to nuclear issues, including the NPT. In order to solve the DPRK nuclear issue peacefully through dialogue, Japan is ready to continue to make every effort towards a resolution by diplomatic means, primarily by actively contributing to the Six Party Talks process.

With regard to the Iranian nuclear issue, it is essential for Iran to implement sincerely all the requests made by the Board in its resolutions since September 2003. It is indispensable that Iran remove the serious concerns of the international community through efforts to promote increased transparency. Japan sincerely hopes that the Iranian nuclear issue will be resolved as soon as possible through Iran’s further efforts.

Japan welcomes Libya’s decision to abandon all of its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs. Japan strongly hopes that the DPRK and those states under suspicion of engaging in WMD development will follow Libya’s example.

The proliferation of nuclear-related technology through underground nuclear proliferation networks and the threat of proliferation of such technology to terrorists are matters of concern. A loop-hole has been revealed in the existing non-proliferation regime, and the international community must address this issue.

Nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament are mutually reinforcing, hence both need to be promoted. Both nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states must remain fully committed to their obligations and commitments under the NPT. In order to achieve the universality of the Treaty, Japan calls upon states not parties to the NPT to accede to it as non-nuclear weapon states without conditions and without
delay.

2. The 2005 NPT Review Conference

The ever-present challenges to the NPT regime give a special significance to the 2005 NPT Review Conference. Japan very much appreciates Ambassador Duarte’s untiring efforts in the preparations for the Review Conference. Issues concerning nuclear non-proliferation will likely be the main focus of the Conference in light of the current international situation. Nevertheless, nuclear weapon states continue to carry a heavy responsibility in maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime.

I would like to emphasize the following points as States Parties prepare for the upcoming Review Conference. Firstly, it is important to set clear objectives for the 2005 Review Conference, as it will be held under different circumstances and conditions from those that pertained in the 1995 and 2000 Review Conferences. Secondly, it is imperative to commence FMCT negotiations before the 2005 Review Conference, as it will make a positive contribution to the strengthening of the NPT regime. Thirdly, it is important to consider effective measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring nuclear weapons or related materials.

Japan attaches great importance to certain specific measures with a view to maintaining and strengthening the NPT regime, such as the entry into force of the CTBT, the early commencement of FMCT negotiations, universalization of the IAEA Additional Protocol, disarmament and non-proliferation education and measures to deal with non-compliance. Japan will work together with other States Parties to contribute toward reaching consensus on such specific measures.

3. CTBT (The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty)

The CTBT is one of the major pillars of the NPT regime. Japan places great importance on its early entry into force and has been making various contributions to that end. The number of countries which have ratified the CTBT has been steadily increasing. Japan welcomes the ratification by the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which is one of the countries whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty’s entry into force. Japan calls upon the remaining eleven countries to follow suit.

Japan, together with Australia, Finland and the Netherlands, hosted the second CTBT Friends Meeting last month here in New York. A Joint Ministerial Statement
was issued, calling upon all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty without delay. A moratorium on nuclear weapon test explosions should be continued pending the entry into force of the Treaty.

4. FMCT (The Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty)

Japan welcomes the United States’ reaffirmation of its support for the commencement of FMCT negotiations. Japan believes that the FMCT is ripe for negotiation, and that we should therefore harness this momentum to commence negotiations early next year, prior to the start of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. All related work should be devoted to this aim, and differing views among member states should be dealt with in the course of the negotiations.

5. The IAEA Additional Protocol

One of the effective means to strengthen nuclear non-proliferation is to promote the universality of the IAEA Additional Protocol. The number of countries which have signed or ratified the Protocol has been increasing. Japan has made various contributions to this end and will continue to do so.

6. Nuclear Disarmament Measures by Nuclear Weapon States

Japan welcomes the entry into force of the Moscow Treaty between Russia and the United States and hopes for full implementation of the Treaty by both states. Japan also welcomes the submission by Russia and the United States of the draft resolution entitled “Bilateral strategic nuclear arms reductions and the new strategic framework.” Japan continues to urge all nuclear weapon states to implement concrete nuclear disarmament measures and to keep other states informed of the progress made.