STATEMENT BY H.E. MR. MARI AMANO
AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENIARY
HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN
TO THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT
AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 66th SESSION
OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

THEMATIC DEBATE: NUCLEAR WEAPONS

14 OCTOBER 2011, NEW YORK

Mr. Chairman,

For the people of my country the issue of nuclear weapons is of immense importance and has a special meaning. Through the peace memorial ceremonies in Hiroshima and Nagasaki every August the citizens of Japan have the opportunity to reaffirm their strong belief that the tragedy caused by the use of nuclear weapons must never happen again. Japan, as the only country to have suffered from atomic bombings, takes nuclear disarmament seriously and has been engaged — and indeed will remain engaged — in substantive activities to achieve a world without nuclear weapons.

In order to advance nuclear disarmament, we need not only individual efforts, but also efforts by all states together. Based on the idea that a world without nuclear weapons should be achieved through concrete and effective steps, this year Japan along with many co-sponsors once again submitted a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament, entitled “United action towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons” with some updates, to this committee. This resolution puts emphasis on concrete and practical united-actions to be taken by the international community towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons. We strongly hope that even larger number of states support it this year.
Mr. Chairman,

The success of last year’s NPT Review Conference to reach consensus on a final document was universally welcomed. But after one year since that conference, we must be pragmatic and focus our attention solidly on the steady implementation of the Action Plan in the NPT Final Document.

With this in mind, last September Japan and nine other like-minded states decided to launch a cross-regional group called the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). Following the second ministerial meeting in Berlin this April, the third meeting was convened in New York last month, where we all agreed to further promote the implementation of the NPT Action Plan. Japan, together with its NPDI partners, will continue to make a tangible contribution to this end.

Mr. Chairman,

For the implementation of the NPT Action Plan, it is of the utmost importance that the nuclear-weapon states follow through on their commitments. The 2010 NPT Final Document reaffirmed the unequivocal undertaking of these states to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals, through further efforts to reduce and eliminate all types of nuclear weapons, deployed and non-deployed. Just as significant, under Action 5 of the Final Document the nuclear-weapon states made an additional pledge to accelerate progress on concrete steps leading to nuclear disarmament and are called upon to report the undertakings to the Preparatory Committee in 2014. In this regard, Japan welcomes the first P5 follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference in Paris, which highlighted issues such as transparency which are important to us. Japan, together with its NPDI partners, shared with the P5 the NPDI’s proposal for a reporting form in accordance with Action 21. We hope this proposal would facilitate the P5’s efforts to come up with a concrete agreement on the issue.

At the same time as the NPT states parties carry out their activities, the non-states parties to the NPT should not remain on the sidelines. Japan calls on these states to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states promptly and without conditions.

Japan highly values the ratification of the New START Treaty by the United States and the Russian Federation and the entry into force of that treaty in February. Japan strongly hopes that
the entry into force of New START will lead to advancements in global nuclear disarmament involving the other countries possessing nuclear weapons. We also call upon all states possessing nuclear weapons to take measures to further reduce the risk of an accidental or unauthorized launch and to ensure their nuclear weapons are kept at the lowest alert level possible in ways that promote international stability and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The two important treaties that promote nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation should be put in place without further delay.

First, as one of the important global efforts for nuclear disarmament, the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) needs to enter into force as soon as possible. It is very disappointing, however, that this vitally important treaty is still far from achieving this goal fifteen years after it was opened for signature. As such, Japan urges all countries that have yet to ratify the treaty, especially the Annex 2 countries, to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Second, as stated in Action 15 of the NPT Final Document, we must immediately begin negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We are convinced that an FMCT is the next logical and urgent step in our endeavor to create the necessary conditions for a world free of nuclear weapons. Therefore, it was deeply regrettable that in its 2011 session the Conference on Disarmament was once again unable to commence negotiations on this treaty. A lot of efforts were made for the immediate commencement of negotiations, but with no emerging prospect of that occurring, we will now need to seriously consider practical measures that will lead to negotiations and that can be agreed to by responsible stakeholders. Currently many countries are considering possible concrete steps to be taken in order to start negotiations. Japan as a member of NPDI will strongly support the Canadian resolution, which was submitted in the General Assembly this year to break the impasse.

Mr. Chairman,

It is important to establish further nuclear-weapon-free zones, where appropriate, as called for in Action 9 of the NPT Final Document, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among States of the region concerned and in accordance with the 1999 Guidelines of the United Nations
Disarmament Commission. The establishment of such zones contributes to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and global and regional peace and security. In this connection, Japan welcomes that intensive talks were held in New York recently between the five nuclear-weapon states and the ASEAN countries on the ratification of the protocol of the Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Zone. We also support efforts made by the UN Secretary General and other relevant actors for the convening next year of a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. Chairman,

Along with advancing nuclear disarmament, strengthening nuclear non-proliferation in line with the spirit of the NPT is an important condition for enhancing peace and security. In this context, the nuclear issues related to the DPRK and Iran are of prime concern to the international community. We urge the DPRK to immediately abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, including its uranium enrichment program and light water reactor construction activities, which are in clear violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Regarding the Iranian nuclear issue, it is indispensable for Iran to remove all the suspicions from the international community and to win its confidence. Japan underscores the importance of Iran’s full and immediate compliance with its international obligations.

With a view to effectively addressing these issues, it is essential to strengthen the IAEA safeguards to reinforce and maintain the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. In this connection, we welcome that the number of states with additional protocols in force increased from 102 to 110 in the past one year. This fact demonstrates that a comprehensive safeguards agreement together with an additional protocol based on the Model Additional Protocol are becoming the international safeguards standard.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly, allow me to conclude by saying that Japan is fully committed to the total elimination of nuclear weapons. However, the road to that destination is still long and there remains much for us to do. In order to attain a peaceful and safe world through nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, Japan will actively work in close cooperation with other UN member states while building bridges between nuclear-weapon and the non-nuclear weapon states.

Thank you.