

Madam Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you, Ambassador Juul, on your assumption of Chair of this Committee. I am confident in your ability to guide us through this session and I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out this important task.

Madam Chairperson,

This Committee, tasked with deliberating on disarmament and related international security questions, is convened amidst difficult times. The international community is facing serious challenges in the field of security, disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the increasing threat of international terrorism and of WMD falling into the hands of terrorists, the proliferation of WMD-related material and technology through underground networks, and compliance issues of individual countries.

Despite these challenges, regrettably three times in a row -- at the Seventh Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference and the World Summit last year and the UN Review Conference on the Programme of Action (PoA) on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) this summer -- no substantive consensus document was achieved on disarmament and non-proliferation. However, we have no time to lament over these results. Two review conferences, the Certain Conventional Weapons Convention (CCW) RevCon and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) RevCon, still await us this year. Furthermore, the Conference on Disarmament (CD), building upon the momentum developed this year, is expected to move ahead next year. Additionally, we will commence the new NPT review process for the 2010 Review Conference next year.

Against this backdrop, the First Committee must squarely confront the challenges the international community faces. It must hold deep deliberations on how these problems can be resolved in an efficient and effective manner, harmonize as much as possible the various approaches of the Member States, and adopt powerful, action-oriented resolutions. For example, Japan's resolution on nuclear disarmament calls for practical and realistic steps including deeper reductions in all types of nuclear weapons. And the resolution on SALW submitted each year by Columbia, South

Africa and Japan has laid out a concrete roadmap for a steady implementation of the 2001 PoA in national, regional and global levels, including the establishment of the Open Ended Working Group to negotiate an International Instrument of marking and tracing, and of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in this area.

Madam Chairperson,

Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the First Committee's methods of work is not only crucial of itself, but also crucial in the context of the UN reforms. We do not need to formulate novel ideas for this end. Rather, we should aim for the full implementation of resolution 59/95 ("Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee") adopted at the 59th General Assembly in 2004. In this connection, Japan places great emphasis on the biennialization or triennialization of the agenda items on a voluntary basis (op1); the submission of draft resolutions in a more concise, focused and action-oriented manner (op3); the consideration of pursuing mergers of draft resolutions on related or complementary issues (op5); follow-up on the agreed resolutions (op6); and information by the Secretary-General on the detailed estimated cost of all resolutions and decisions (op8). In particular, the First Committee should always be aware of budgetary implications when deliberating on resolutions and decisions. Also, greater involvement of civil society in the work of this Committee as important.

The resolutions adopted in the First Committee and the subsequent General Assembly cannot be left unattended, but should be followed up. For openers, Japan calls upon all the Member States to refer to their follow-up actions in their general debate statements. Please allow me to introduce as one example our follow-up actions to our nuclear disarmament resolution. For the universalization of the NPT and the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), Japan held disarmament and non-proliferation talks with India, Pakistan and Israel from May to June this year and urged all three countries to join the NPT and ratify the CTBT. These are some of our past follow-up activities and we will continue such activities in the future.

Madam Chairperson,

At this stage, I would like to touch upon the fact that this year marks the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the CTBT. The Treaty now enjoys near

universal support. 176 countries have signed the Treaty and 135 have ratified it. We greatly welcome Vietnam's ratification in March this year, which leaves only the required ratification of 10 more countries for its entry into force. For the purpose of facilitating its early entry into force, a Ministerial meeting in support of the CTBT was held two weeks ago in this building, which was attended from Japan by Mr. Ito, then Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Madam Chairperson,

In relation to the upcoming meeting of international fora, including the two Review Conferences and the CD, the United Nations should not only render the necessary logistical assistance and services, but also pay close attention to their outcomes so that future meetings will succeed. Of particular importance are the CD and the new NPT review process, both of which will be referred to in the various draft resolutions, including Japan's nuclear disarmament draft resolution.

In the CD, a more productive environment has developed due to the six Presidents' (P6) initiative. The only missing element now is the commencement of negotiations. As I stated in one of the final meetings of the CD, although there exists a range of opinions from the perspective of the whole CD schedule, no opposition has been expressed from any Member State to the establishment itself of an ad hoc committee for negotiating a treaty on the prohibition of production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). The current and incoming Presidents should closely cooperate so that the CD can finally start negotiations on an FMCT as soon as next year's sessions begin. In the meantime, all the CD Member States should do their utmost to prepare for the immediate commencement of such negotiations while trying to continue and even deepen our deliberations on other major agenda items of the CD.

Lastly, regarding the important commencement of the new review process of the NPT: in order to overcome the disappointing result of 2005, the States Parties should all work together to make the upcoming 2007 Preparatory Committee a constructive beginning, so that we can achieve a successful outcome in the 2010 Review Conference.

Thank you.