

Statement by H.E. Mr. Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan  
At the United Nations Security Council Ministerial Meeting  
On the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction  
21 September 2017

Mr. President,

Please allow me to begin by emphasizing how timely it is for the Security Council members to have this opportunity during the High Level Week of UN General Assembly to discuss non-proliferation, an issue which the international community must tackle in unison.

Japan is deeply concerned by the serious challenges facing the international nonproliferation regime. It is critical for this Council, which holds primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, to resolutely and concretely address the serious issues that are shaking the very foundation of the nonproliferation regime.

Given the seriousness of the situation, it is urgent that we achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) without further delay, in addition to strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) regime. Japan calls upon the international community to work closely on practical and concrete measures to this end.

Mr. President,

North Korea has ignored the strong protests and warnings of the international community by going ahead with a ballistic missile launch that flew over Japan last week. Earlier this month, it also conducted its sixth nuclear test, which is suspected of being a hydrogen-bomb test and which was on a far greater scale than previous tests. This is an entirely

unacceptable provocation.

North Korea's provocative actions, including its nuclear test and the series of ballistic missile launches, pose grave challenges to the international non-proliferation regime. It goes without saying that North Korea's actions clearly violate relevant UN Security Council resolutions. They also pose an unprecedented, grave and imminent threat to the peace and security of the region, including Japan.

No bright future awaits North Korea if it continues on its present path and its isolation from the world continues. Japan strongly urges North Korea to fully implement the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the recently adopted Resolution 2375, and to immediately demonstrate seriousness and concrete actions toward the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Japan also calls for North Korea to return to compliance with the NPT and the IAEA safeguards agreement as soon as possible.

The denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula requires the international community to apply the strongest possible pressure on North Korea. Current efforts are insufficient, and further pressure is needed. To this end, Japan strongly calls for all UN Member States to fully and promptly implement the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. No State should be allowed to become a loophole in the North Korea sanctions regime.

Mr. President,

Non-proliferation of chemical weapons is another important issue that needs to be addressed by the international community. Japan, which has experienced a sarin chemical attack on its subways in the past, cannot accept the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances.

In this regard, Japan condemns in the strongest terms the use of chemical weapons in the town of Khan-Shaykhun in Syria. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) are currently conducting their investigation to identify the perpetrators of chemical attacks. Japan supports the activities of the JIM. I would like to stress that the Security Council must be united and hold the perpetrators accountable in order to prevent the recurrence of chemical weapons use.

Mr. President,

Finally, I would like to address the issues surrounding Iran. Japan supports the Iranian nuclear deal, which will contribute to the international non-proliferation regime and the stability of the Middle East. It is extremely important that the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) be continuously and steadily implemented.

In this regard, Japan supports the monitoring and verification activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency and again underlines the importance of the steady implementation of the JCPOA and its spirit. The ballistic missile launches by Iran are inconsistent with Security Council Resolution 2231. Japan strongly calls for Iran to play a constructive role in the region.

I would like to conclude by calling for the international community to take concerted efforts against actions that threaten the international non-proliferation regime. Thank you for your kind attention.