

**Statement by H.E. Ms. TAKAICHI Sanae,
Minister of State for Science and Technology Policy, Japan
at the 67th IAEA General Conference
25 September 2023**

President of the General Conference,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,

Japan highly commends the leadership of IAEA Director General Grossi in promptly and appropriately addressing crucial nuclear issues in the international community in the midst of a challenging international environment. Japan strongly supports the Agency's activities.

International Non-Proliferation regime

Japan attaches great importance to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In May, during our G7 presidency, Japan hosted the G7 Hiroshima Summit and emphasized our commitment to important matters such as dealing with regional non-proliferation issues, applying nuclear technology and maintaining transparency of civilian plutonium management. The Government of Japan will continue to cooperate with the Agency, which plays a primary role in these fields, and will make efforts to strengthen and maintain the global non-proliferation regime as well as promote the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

President,

Non-Proliferation (including North Korea and Iran)

IAEA safeguards are the fundamental instrument for ensuring global nuclear non-proliferation. Japan strongly supports the Agency's efforts to make them more effective and efficient. In this regard, Japan also strongly supports the universalization of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements (CSA), Additional Protocols (AP) and amended Small Quantities Protocols (SQP).

President,

The international community should continue to work together to resolve regional non-proliferation issues.

First and foremost, North Korea's nuclear and missile programs pose a serious challenge to the international non-proliferation regime and are totally unacceptable. Japan strongly urges North Korea to take concrete steps towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles of all ranges and related programs. In this regard, I would like to emphasize the critical importance for all States to fully implement relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. I also stress that the denuclearization of North Korea requires a robust verification. Japan highly commends the Agency's continued work in enhancing its ability and readiness to verify North Korea's nuclear program.

With regard to Iran's nuclear-related activities, Japan supports the JCPOA as a means to uphold the international non-proliferation regime. Japan will continue to make diplomatic efforts towards realizing the mutual return to compliance with the JCPOA by all relevant countries. At the same time, with an aim towards resolving the outstanding safeguards issues, the Government of Japan calls on Iran to cooperate fully and unconditionally with the Agency including through the implementation of the previous related resolutions adopted by the Board of Governors and the March 2023 Joint Statement between Iran and the Agency.

Nuclear facilities in Ukraine

Japan remains gravely concerned with regard to the situation of nuclear facilities in Ukraine. Russia's military activities near or at nuclear power plants and other facilities in Ukraine cannot be tolerated. Japan condemns Russia's actions in the strongest terms.

Japan commends the continuous efforts of the Agency to secure nuclear safety and security in Ukraine, including the permanent presence of IAEA experts at all nuclear power sites in the country, the seven indispensable pillars ('Seven Pillars') for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict outlined by the Director General as well as the five concrete principles for protecting the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant (ZNPP)

established by the Director General. In this regard, Japan has contributed approximately 12 million euros to support the Agency's efforts and will continue to provide necessary support.

President,

Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy becomes increasingly important as a response to global issues such as climate change and in the context of achieving the SDGs. In particular, from the perspective of contributing to the realization of Zero-Emission Society, Japan supports the Agency's participation in COP 28. Moreover, Japan welcomes the IAEA's new initiative regarding food security, "Atoms4Food".

Japan supports the Agency's activities regarding the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including significant initiatives by Director General Grossi in the fields of zoonotic diseases, marine plastic pollution and cancer care, by providing contributions, including those through the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) and the Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI).

Decommissioning of TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station

Peaceful uses of nuclear energy should be promoted in a way that ensures the highest standards of nuclear safety, security, and non-proliferation.

In this regard, Japan has been steadily advancing the decommissioning of TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station and environmental restoration activities off site, with the engagement of the Agency, which has a unique mandate to establish international standards of safety regarding influences on health and environment in the field of nuclear sector. In July the Agency issued a Comprehensive Report on the results of the Agency's review over 2 years on the safety of ALPS treated water. The report concluded that Japan's work on the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea is consistent with international safety standards and that radiation impacts on humans and the environment would be negligible. In addition, Japan has been explaining to the international community about the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea based on scientific evidence in

a highly transparent manner including before the discharge. Consequently, countries from a wide range of regions have expressed their understanding and support to our efforts.

This August, Japan began the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea, taking all possible measures to ensure its safety. Since we started the discharge into the sea, the Agency has consistently confirmed and announced the results of its monitoring in a prompt and highly transparent manner. It has been a month since the discharge of ALPS treated water into the sea started and the operation is being processed safely as planned. Japan expresses its gratitude and respect to the professional work of Director General Grossi and the Agency which is being conducted in an independent, objective and transparent manner.

Furthermore, on September 18th, the Memorandum of Cooperation between Japan and the IAEA on IAEA Monitoring and Assessment Activities concerning the ALPS-Treated Water Discharges at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station was signed. This memorandum reaffirms the engagement of the IAEA, such as its continued review and monitoring, and will further contribute to enhancing the international community's confidence in the safety.

Japan will continue to provide all relevant data and explanations based on scientific evidence in a transparent manner to the public both in Japan and in the international community. The Government of Japan, with the Agency's continued involvement, will continue to ensure safety until the "last drop" of water will be discharged into the sea, ascertaining that the discharge would never adversely affect human health and the environment.

China made a statement earlier that is not based on scientific evidence. I do not repeat Japan's position that I have just stated. China is the only country, despite being a member of the IAEA, that continues to spread scientifically groundless information and impose unreasonable import restrictions. Japan continues to urge China to take actions based on science and to provide accurate information.

Nuclear Safety

Japan places great importance on close cooperation with the international community in the field of nuclear safety.

Japan has been participating in the IAEA Safety Standards Committees as a committee member and will continue to make efforts to improve nuclear regulations by sharing experiences and knowledge concerning nuclear and radiation safety in Japan. Japan also contributed to enhancing nuclear safety by participating in the review process of the 8th and 9th joint review meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in March of this year. Japan will continue to contribute to the safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste through the review process of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management.

Japan has also been supporting the activities of the IAEA Response and Assistance Network (RANET) Capacity Building Centre (CBC) in Fukushima and contributing to enhancing nuclear safety worldwide based on the experience and lessons learned from the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. Japan also continues to assist with the development of infrastructure and human resources in countries introducing nuclear power plants.

Nuclear Security

Nuclear Security is one of the most important issues that the international community should address. Japan is proactively working to minimize stocks of nuclear materials which could potentially pose a threat to the international community, such as the completion of removal of Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) fuel from the research reactor "Yayoi" at the University of Tokyo and Kyoto University Critical Assembly (KUCA). Following these actions, Japan decided to remove HEU fuel from the Kindai University Teaching and Research Reactor (UTR-KINKI), which is the last research reactor possessing HEU in Japan, and convert it to a LEU use reactor last September and started preparing for implementing this decision.

In Summer 2024, Japan will receive a mission of IPPAS in order to work on making further enhancements in our nuclear security program. Japan has

been participating in the IAEA Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC) as a committee member and will continue to make efforts to enhance nuclear programs by sharing experiences and knowledge concerning nuclear security in Japan.

Japan will continue contributing to strengthening international nuclear security, in cooperation with the IAEA, through activities for regional human resource development, including more effective trainings by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA)'s Integrated Support Center for Nuclear Nonproliferation and Nuclear Security (ISCN), which is an IAEA Collaborating Centre in the field of nuclear security.

As a single nation cannot ensure global nuclear security, Japan stresses the important role of legal frameworks such as the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). Japan continues to make efforts to promote the universalization of these conventions.

Japan's Nuclear Energy Policy

This past February, the Japan Atomic Energy Commission (JAEC) revised the "Basic Policy for Nuclear Energy", which serves as a compass for the government's long-term direction regarding the use of nuclear energy. This "Basic Policy for Nuclear Energy" states that the effective use of nuclear energy is important for Japan from the viewpoint of seeking energy security and carbon neutrality, and that promoting the stable use of nuclear energy under the principle of ensuring safety is a major prerequisite. The Policy also mentions the necessity of long-term operation of nuclear power plants including the restarting of existing nuclear power plants, and emphasizes the importance of utilizing nuclear energy not only for power applications but also for non-power applications, such as medical use.

Considering the lessons learned from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station accident, it is essential that nuclear power be used sustainably, placing top priority on safety above all other circumstances, to achieve both a decarbonized society and a stable energy supply.

Japan has established the basic policy for achieving GX (Green Transformation) aiming for emission reduction by shifting to a clean energy oriented economy and society as well as industrial structures which promote economic growth and development. Japan continues to proceed with the restart of nuclear power plants while giving top priority to safety, in order to achieve a nuclear power ratio of 20% to 22% in 2030, as demonstrated in the previous energy mix.

In addition, for the maximum use of existing reactors, Japan has amended its laws to allow for an extension of operation periods, provided that a strict safety review is conducted. Moreover, Japan will work on the development and construction of next-generation advanced reactors that incorporate new safety mechanisms, as well as promoting R&D through international collaboration with like-minded countries and building a robust supply chain.

Research and Development

Japan welcomes the activities of the Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training Related to Nuclear Science and Technology for Asia and the Pacific (RCA). Over the last fifty years, cooperation among Member States of the RCA has enabled the promotion of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology, thereby bringing socio-economic benefits to peoples in the Asia-Pacific region. For its part, Japan, as an active member of the RCA, has committed itself both in finance and personnel to RCA activities since its participation in 1978. Japan will continue to work together with other members to further advance cooperation at RCA projects.

Regarding fast reactors, the development of a demonstration reactor project has begun in Japan based on the "Strategic Roadmap". Japan will promote the project by utilizing not only the innovation and knowledge of the private sector, which has been cultivated up to now, but also in cooperation with France and the United States. Japan has also started a project to develop a demonstration reactor for the HTGR. Hydrogen production is important to bring out the best features of HTGRs. Japan will establish elemental technologies for hydrogen production while utilizing the test reactor HTTR. Regarding small modular reactors, in cooperation with overseas

demonstration projects aiming to start operation at the end of the 2020s, Japanese companies are making efforts to participate in these projects with high design and manufacturing capabilities.

In addition, for the realization of fusion energy which is expected to be the next-generation energy source, Japan has published the Fusion Energy Innovation Strategy this April and has promoted strategies for developing the fusion industry and fusion technologies. As fusion energy is recognized as a symbol of international cooperation, Japan emphasizes the importance of fusion research and development including the ITER Project and the Broader Approach Activities as well as a variety of academic research. We would especially like to highlight that the state-of-the-art research tokamak JT-60SA in Broader Approach Activities is planned to achieve its first plasma this autumn.

Japan is promoting the domestic production of medical radioisotopes based on the Action Plan formulated last year which aims to provide patients with nuclear medicine treatment using domestically produced radioisotopes. Through the stable supply of Mo-99/Tc-99m, strengthening of research and development for the production of Ac-225 and enhancement of efforts toward the practical use of At-211, Japan aims to enhance the medical system with cutting edge nuclear science and technology as well as to improve people's welfare.

Plutonium Management

Japan will maintain adherence to the principle of “not possessing plutonium without specific purposes”. Based on this principle, JAEC set out “The Basic Principles on Japan's Utilization of Plutonium” in 2018, which announced a policy of reducing the size of its plutonium stockpile.

As the Agency has concluded that all nuclear material in Japan, including plutonium, remained in peaceful activities under stringent IAEA safeguards, there are no issues in relation to non-proliferation.

Japan is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities in nuclear non-proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. To this end, Japan will steadily implement plutonium thermal power generation, increase transparency in the use and management of its plutonium, and accept

stringent IAEA safeguards.

Final Disposal of Radioactive Waste and Decommissioning

Japan will strengthen international collaboration concerning final disposal of radioactive waste, which is a common issue for all countries using nuclear energy.

Taking into consideration the discussion held among major countries using nuclear energy and the Agency at the international roundtables for final disposal of radioactive waste, we will continue to further promote international cooperation including workshops on research cooperation, international joint research and following up on each country's progress.

Convention on Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage

In promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the establishment of the global nuclear liability regime is an important issue. In June this year, Japan hosted the 3rd Meeting of the Contracting Parties and Signatories to the Convention on the Supplementary Compensation for Nuclear Damage (CSC), and a Japanese representative chaired this meeting. During the meeting, meaningful dialogue to enhance the function of the CSC took place. The expanded participation of the CSC, contributes greatly to the establishment of the global nuclear liability regime providing prompt and fair relief to the victims of nuclear accidents, along with the Paris Convention and the Vienna Convention.

Gender parity

Gender parity expands the horizon in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy and non-proliferation. Japan has been a proud contributor to the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship initiative since its launch. Japan welcomes the continued efforts by the Agency to achieve gender parity.

Conclusion

In closing, on behalf of my government, I would like to reiterate Japan's firm determination to continue to provide its maximum support for the Agency.

Thank you, President.