

The Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety
Statement on behalf of the Host Country
(Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Koichiro Gemba)
(December 15, 2012, Fukushima Prefecture)

Distinguished representatives of countries and organizations,
H.E. Yukiya Amano, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

(Introduction)

1. After a year and nine months since the Great East Japan Earthquake happened, this Conference is held with your participation, from all over the world to Fukushima. This is only possible because of the unyielding spirit of those affected by the disaster, the strenuous efforts of workers who have responded to the accident and all the warm cooperation and support from within Japan and across the world. On behalf of the people of Japan, I would like to reiterate our sincere gratitude and respect to all those who extended their support.
2. Ever since the accident occurred at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station of Tokyo Electric Power Company, the international community has addressed the urgent task of strengthening nuclear safety. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety was held last year in June and the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety was unanimously adopted in September. Since then, a variety of efforts have been made all over the world to strengthen nuclear safety. I would like to pay my respects to the IAEA, the co-sponsor of this Conference, for fulfilling the leading role in this process and Mr. Amano, the Director General of the IAEA, for his leadership.
3. Japan has been making a collective effort to recover from the nuclear accident and everyone is still striving for restoration and revival following the accident. I was born and raised here in Fukushima. The accident actually happened roughly 40 kilometers away from my hometown. In this respect, as a person engaged in national policy and as a person who grew up in Fukushima, the tragedy brought about by this accident seriously hit home for me. I became determined to overcome this tragedy, restore the lives of those affected and recover disaster-affected areas. I hope that this Conference and your visit to Fukushima will help everyone that gathered from around the world to feel the people's willpower and strength to overcome this catastrophe and to continue to make steady strides toward recovery and revival. With a vision for recovery, the people of Fukushima are determined to rise above the challenges with full might and make a powerful revival so that those areas can become better and stronger than ever. Many of them are still forced to stay in evacuation areas and remain fearful of the effects of radiation. My wish is that, through this Conference, we can gather wisdom from around the world for the affected areas and disseminate initiatives undertaken in the disaster-affected areas throughout the world. I would like this Conference to provide the opportunity to further strengthen ties with the international community in order to seek its cooperation in such fields as decommissioning, remediation, waste management, and health monitoring. In this light, it is very delightful, on the occasion of this Conference, to see the cooperation between Fukushima and the IAEA become stronger in areas such as human health and remediation. Japan as a whole is

eager to provide full support to further reinforce this cooperation. Without the revival of Fukushima Prefecture there can be no revival of Japan. With the cooperation of the international community, we will dedicate all our strength to strive for the reconstruction following the accident, restoration of the lives of those affected and the recovery of disaster-affected areas. We would like to ask all of you in the international community to continue to extend support based on “scientific and objective information”.

4. We can never let a nuclear accident happen ever again anywhere in the world. With this strong determination, Japan will share with the international community knowledge and lessons learned from the accident. Today, in addition to providing updates on Japan’s response to the accident and measures to strengthen nuclear safety, I would like to present how Japan can contribute to a safer world building upon what it has experienced since the accident. I hope that this will provide a starting point for your discussions over the next three days.

(Japan’s response to the accident)

5. First of all, I would like to explain the current status of in restoring the nuclear power station. The nuclear reactors and spent fuel pools have been cooled down and stabilized since the end of last year. Also, compared to the time of the accident, a significant decrease of radioactive releases has been achieved. We are now steadily taking medium- to long-term measures toward the decommissioning of the reactors. Plans for the decommissioning involve analyses of conditions inside the nuclear reactors and the removal of damaged fuels. No country in the world has ever experienced such an operation and it will most likely require a great deal of time as well as new technologies. It is necessary to bring together and utilize domestic and overseas know-how in order for Japan to accomplish the decommissioning process. Japan will go through the process in an open and transparent manner. In light of this, Japan will host an IAEA international expert mission next year.
6. In accordance with the on-site stabilization, the evacuation order is being lifted in more and more areas and some municipalities are even planning to prepare for the return of the residents. However, as I mentioned earlier, it is true that many people are still forced to live in evacuation areas under difficult conditions. The biggest issue we face is remediation. I strongly realize my responsibility to restore the environment so that the residents can have their normal lives back to the greatest extent possible. In addition to remediation, Japan will dedicate itself to the restoration of the lives of the residents by addressing issues such as compensation and human health.
7. I believe that sharing knowledge and lessons that Japan learned through the experience of responding to this accident will surely contribute to promoting nuclear safety worldwide. As the country that experienced the accident, Japan will utilize its knowledge gained from responding to the accident to make active contributions in conducting research and development with regards to decommissioning, remediation and nuclear safety, as well as assessing effects of radiation to human health. In cooperation with the IAEA, Japan will continue to share knowledge and lessons learned from the accident and progress in the decommissioning process. Japan will request the IAEA to consider setting up an international advisory group on decommissioning.

(Strengthening Nuclear Safety in Japan)

8. Next, I would like to refer to strengthening the framework for nuclear regulation in Japan. Japan has made significant reforms to its regulatory system for nuclear energy so that an accident like the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster will never happen again. We have separated the regulatory body from the administrative body in charge of promoting the use of nuclear power and founded the Nuclear Regulation Authority in order to implement safety regulations from an independent point of view. From now on, the Nuclear Regulation Authority will formulate new safety standards based on the lessons learned from the accident, continue to improve the standards and ensure the country's nuclear safety.
9. Japan has experience in ensuring the peaceful use of nuclear energy for over half a century. Based on years of experience inherited from the forerunners and new knowledge gained from responding to the nuclear disaster, we will continue to strive for improving the nuclear regulatory system while developing the human resources capable of contributing to global nuclear safety.
10. In this regard, when the Nuclear Regulation Authority formulates new safety standards and other rules based on our experience of responding to the accident, Japan will promptly host an IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission and strive to contribute to improving nuclear regulation across the world while reviewing the validity of the new regulations from an international point of view.

(Japan's contribution toward strengthening nuclear safety worldwide)

11. Next, I will present how Japan can contribute to strengthening nuclear safety worldwide. First, Japan will continue to share knowledge and lessons learned from the accident. Japan has already submitted detailed reports on the accident to the IAEA twice last year. In addition, the accident has been thoroughly investigated from all angles, from a public and private point of view, by organizations such as investigation committees set up by the government and the Diet respectively. Their reports have been publicly released to be shared with the world. We are confident that the insights offered through those reports provide useful information for regulatory bodies not only in Japan, but also in other countries of the world.
12. Secondly, Japan will contribute to global nuclear safety through the formulation of norms related to nuclear safety. It is becoming increasingly important to achieve and maintain higher levels of nuclear safety throughout the world. One of the keystones for this is provided by the IAEA Safety Standards. Based on knowledge and lessons learned from the nuclear accident, Japan has been contributing to the discussion about reviewing the IAEA Safety Standards and it will continue to make the future findings available in order to further improve the standards. In addition, Japan will actively participate in the discussion about strengthening the nuclear safety-related conventions. At the 2nd Extraordinary Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety held in August this year, Japan, with the U.S. and other like-minded countries, has led the decision on the "Action-Oriented Objectives for Strengthening Nuclear Safety," which identifies a set of measures to be taken to strengthen nuclear safety in all countries. I hereby express that Japan will fully commit itself to follow the actions identified in the document and Japan strongly encourages other countries to follow suit.

13. Thirdly, Japan will make international contributions in the area of emergency preparedness and response. From the initial stage of the accident, Japan, through coordination with other countries, made full use of assistance including the provision of supplies and equipment offered as well as experts sent. Based on the insights from this experience, Japan has been actively contributing to international efforts to enhance international response at the time of an accident through efforts such as making proposals to strengthen the IAEA's Response and Assistance Network (RANET). In addition to contributing to the prevention of accidents, Japan will endeavor to take a leading role in preparing for an emergency in the event of nuclear or radiological incidents. In order to make Japan's accumulated know-how and lessons learned from the accident widely available and utilized should a nuclear or radiological emergency occur in another country, we are planning to register experts from Japan with RANET and play an integral part in the world's emergency preparedness and response.

(Conclusion)

14. "Without the revival of Fukushima Prefecture there can be no revival of Japan." Keeping this in mind, I am determined to continue to protect and support the lives of those affected by the disaster. People in Fukushima, especially women and children, are very worried about the effects of radiation on their health. It is important to gather all the scientific expertise of the international community to alleviate their concerns and free them from their worries. Japan will strive with full might to revive the site of the nuclear accident and bring life back to "Furusato", the homeland. This is a challenge that no other country has experienced. Japan is firmly determined to restore its beautiful and rich homeland filled with smiles. I am resolved to play a leading role to restore Fukushima so that people can feel comfortable giving birth, raising children, working and living in Fukushima. With the determination of "turning the table" or transforming challenges into opportunities, Japan will use its experience of post-disaster reconstruction to restore and further revitalize Fukushima. Having expressed these strong determinations, I would like to end my speech as the host of this Conference.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.