

## **Steps to promote the achievement of a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone in the Middle East and the realization of the goals and objectives of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East**

### **Report submitted by Japan**

1. Lack of progress in the establishment of a weapons-of-mass-destruction-free zone in the Middle East poses a serious problem for the credibility of the NPT. Japan supported, and continues to fully support, the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, which calls for the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems. In this regard, following the fifty seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly, Japan once again joined, at the fifty eighth session, the consensus adoption of resolution 57/34 of 27 October 2003, entitled “Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East.”

2. The establishment of a zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East will ultimately require the adherence by all states in the region to the NPT, the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), and the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by all states in the region would also be a substantial practical step towards this end. Japan has been actively taking part in international efforts to encourage universal adherence to these multilateral legally binding instruments on disarmament and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a part of such endeavors, on the occasion of the visit of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Israel to Japan from 24 to 27 August 2003, Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, urged the Israeli Government to become a Party to the NPT, the BWC and the CWC as well as to ratify the CTBT as soon as possible. Japan also urged, at the ministerial level, Governments of Syria, Egypt, and Iran to join the WMD related treaties at the earliest date.

3. It is no less important that compliance with these legal instruments should be fully assured. Japan also considers it crucial that the future Government of Iraq adhere to all relevant non-proliferation agreements in order to prove its willingness to behave as a responsible member of the international community.

In this context, Japan stresses the necessity of strengthening the IAEA Safeguards system, which plays a vital role in underpinning the NPT. Japan strongly believes that the conclusion of the IAEA Safeguards Agreements and Additional Protocols by all states in the region is essential for the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon Free Zone. As a concrete measure to this end, Japan held an Expert Meeting on the IAEA Additional Protocol with the Iranian Authorities on 26 August 2003, and Japan is willing to hold similar meetings with other states in the region.

4. The recent decision by Libya to eliminate all programs to develop weapons of mass destruction is a significant step forward in the realization of the establishment of the weapons of mass destruction free zone in the Middle East. Japan is ready to assist Libya's on-going efforts to comply with the international legal instruments and frameworks on disarmament and non-proliferation and, in March 2004, sent officials in charge to Libya to hold discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation. Japan and Libya are planning to hold a Consultation on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation in the early future.

5. Japan is firmly committed to supporting the Middle East peace process, a key to achieving regional stability. Such stability is a vital factor in establishing conditions for a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Japan will strengthen its efforts to work with Israelis and Palestinians, as well as other countries concerned, to resume peace negotiations between the two sides, providing assistance for the Palestinians' reform efforts and building confidence in the mid to long-term.