A need for united action for the early entry into force of the CTBT

An appeal from the country of Hiroshima, Nagasaki and Fukushima

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On behalf of the Japanese people and the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), I have the honour to send a message to the readers of Spectrum. The importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) cannot be overemphasized. The CTBT, along with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, is an indispensable pillar of the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Japan thus attaches the utmost importance to the early entry into force of the CTBT.

As the only nation to have suffered nuclear devastation as a result of the bombs detonated over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, and as a country that suffered from a nuclear power plant accident last year, our expectations of the CTBT are higher than ever. Because of my strong belief in the CTBT, I have undertaken work for the early entry into force of the Treaty over the years in my various capacities, in particular as Foreign Minister of Japan from 2002 to 2004 as well as Co-Chair of the ICNND.

Firstly, ever since chairing the 1st Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in 1999, Japan has participated actively in all ensuing conferences. As Foreign Minister at the time, I participated in the 3rd Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in 2003 and the 1st and 2nd “Friends of the CTBT” Foreign Ministers Meetings in 2002 and 2004. In August 2003, cooperating with Foreign Ministers of Austria and Finland, I sent Joint Ministerial Letters to the States that had not yet signed or ratified the CTBT in order to facilitate the early entry into force of the Treaty.

Secondly, the ICNND attaches high importance to the role of the CTBT. The establishment of the ICNND was
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proposed in June 2008 by Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda as a joint initiative of the Australian and Japanese Governments in order to lay out a road map for the elimination of nuclear weapons. All the Commissioners, including former Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans and myself as Co-Chairs, fully shared this recognition, and the Commission thus recommended in its 2009 report entitled “Eliminating Nuclear Threats: A Practical Agenda for Global Policymakers”, as follows:

“All states that have not already done so should sign and ratify the CTBT unconditionally and without delay. Pending entry into force, all states should continue to refrain from nuclear testing. All signatories should provide the necessary financial, technical and political support for the continued development and operation of the (Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization) CTBTO, including completing the global coverage of its monitoring systems, facilitating on-site inspection when warranted, and establishing effective national data centres and information gathering systems.”

BRINGING THE CTBT INTO FORCE

Thirdly, recognizing that it is imperative to follow up and not to let such an important report be put on the shelf, we launched a new Asia Pacific Leadership Network for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament (APLN) in May 2011. I am thankful to my co-chair Gareth Evans for the efforts he put in to create this.

The APLN is comprised of 30 former senior political, diplomatic and military leaders from 13 countries of the Asian region, including the States possessing nuclear weapons such as China, India and Pakistan. It is designed to build upon the work of the ICNND. Members of the APLN met for the first inaugural meeting in Tokyo in November 2011. We signed a joint statement strongly supporting a nuclear-weapon-free world and calling on policymakers to “get serious” about nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. One of the five distinct but interrelated sets of policy commitments is action on the critical building blocks for both non-proliferation and disarmament, including bringing the CTBT into force.

Fourthly, it is important to support other governments’ initiatives. For example, Kazakhstan, which has suffered hundreds of nuclear tests by the Soviet Union, has become a strong driving force against nuclear testing. An important recent initiative was the International Forum for a Nuclear Weapons-Free World to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, which took place in Astana, Kazakhstan, in October 2011. The Forum, in which I also participated, issued a declaration urging all nations to ratify the CTBT.

As shown above, all kinds of efforts and united action around the world are indispensable to build a world without nuclear weapons, which includes realizing the early entry into force of the CTBT. The work of the CTBTO is crucial in this regard. Let me take this opportunity to express my strong support for Ambassador Tóth and the rest of the CTBTO staff. Remember that the international community stands firmly behind you!

RESPONDING RAPIDLY TO THE FUKUSHIMA ACCIDENT

One year has passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake and the subsequent nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. In the face of the tragic events, the CTBTO quickly provided the international community with accurate and objective information on the composition and dispersion of radionuclides worldwide, using its Atmospheric Transport Modelling (ATM) calculations, helping to establish that radioactivity around the world was below harmful levels. I heard of the tremendous amount of work carried out by CTBTO staff and highly appreciate it. We agreed to include this point in the Final Declaration of the 7th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT. The CTBT verification system is capable of bringing scientific and civil benefits, including for tsunami
warning systems and other disaster alert systems in addition to its primary function of detecting nuclear explosions. Today the world has plenty of natural disasters. Here is my message from the nation that has suffered a nuclear power plant accident in the 21st century: the countries which have not adhered to the Treaty should do so at the earliest time, taking particular note of the advantages of the International Monitoring System (IMS) data in the event of natural disasters.

**JAPAN HELPS TO ENHANCE THE CTBTO’S ATM SYSTEM**

I have learned that the Government of Japan has decided to make a voluntary contribution of roughly US$ 737,000 for the enhancement of the ATM system. This amount covers approximately half of the total costs of one computer system and the enhancement of the data storage as estimated by the CTBTO. The ATM system needs to be enhanced since it provided objective CTBTO data during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident as mentioned above and helped to prevent further damages caused by rumours. Therefore, Japan decided to lead the project concerning the enhancement of the ATM system and to bear approximately half of the total costs. Further voluntary contributions by other countries would be highly appreciated to realize this project.

Finally, I wholeheartedly welcome the decision by the parliament of the Indonesia to approve ratification of the Treaty on 6 December 2011. As a fellow parliamentarian, I definitely put this at the top of my list of 2011’s disarmament and non-proliferation news. Japan has continuously reiterated the importance of the Treaty to the Indonesian government and parliamentary officials in addition to promoting the CTBT at high-level bilateral talks. I also heard that the mayors of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the international organization Mayors for Peace1 sent timely letters addressed to the Chairman of the First Commission of the House of the Representatives of Indonesia in November 2011 to encourage the country’s ratification. I strongly hope that other countries, inspired by Indonesia’s positive move2, will follow suit.

I would like to urge the international community to continue its hard work and take united action so that the Treaty can enter into force as soon as possible. Amongst various groups of countries supporting disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the New Agenda Coalition (NAC), I have high expectations for the activities of the 10 non-nuclear weapon States3 of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI). The NPDI was jointly launched by Australia and Japan in September 2010 as a new action-oriented and cross-regional group. One of the priorities of the NPDI is also the early entry into force of the CTBT. I sincerely hope that the international community, including civil society, unites behind the Treaty and that the year 2012 will bring us more good news for the future of the CTBT.

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**BIOPGRAPHICAL NOTE**

YORIKO KAWAGUCHI has been a Member of the House of Councillors for the Liberal Democratic Party since 2005. She was Co-Chair of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament from 2008 to 2010; Special Adviser to the Prime Minister of Japan, responsible for foreign affairs from 2004 to 2005; Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2002 to 2004, and Minister for the Environment from 2000 to 2002.

Previous positions included Managing Director of Suntory Ltd, Director General of Global Environmental Affairs at the Ministry of International Trade and Industry, and Minister at the Embassy of Japan to the United States.

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1 Mayors for Peace was instigated by the mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1982 as a call for worldwide solidarity in an initiative to ban nuclear weapons. Over 5,000 cities from 153 countries and regions had joined the organization by March 2012.

2 The ratification process was completed in February 2012.

3 Australia, Canada, Chile, Germany, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates.