Opening Statement

by
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Introduction

This Conference -- from its original conception through all the preparations leading to today's opening events -- symbolizes the unique co-operation between the Government and the people of Japan and the United Nations in advancing the goal of disarmament as a key component of international peace and security.

I would like therefore to begin by asking Parliamentary Secretary Kojima to communicate to the Government of Japan my deep appreciation not just for its assistance in organizing this important conference but also for its many constructive efforts -- especially in the United Nations -- on behalf of the worthy goals of disarmament and non-proliferation. As just one noteworthy example, Japan's pioneer, persistent and constructive efforts both before and after the recent UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons have earned the respect of the entire international community. The generous assistance of the Government of Japan to the work of the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs is another good example of how Japan's support for disarmament is being pursued both in word and in deed.

I wish also to thank Governor Tanimoto and the people of the Prefecture of Ishikawa for their
support in making this conference possible and for their appreciation of the importance to citizens everywhere of the issues that this conference will address. I am most grateful to Mayor Yamade of the city of Kanazawa. Together their leadership, and understanding of the many ways that individual municipalities can work on behalf of broader goals of international peace and security, is appreciated. I thank them for their gracious hospitality in welcoming the participants of this conference to this beautiful city. May I also, on behalf of the United Nations, thank the participants for accepting our invitation to this conference.

**Theme**

The theme of this Asia-Pacific regional conference concerns the "Evolution of the scope of security and disarmament in the 21st century." A theme of this sweeping scope scarcely requires any explanation or elaboration, for the importance of the issues to be addressed speak for themselves.

The geographic focus of this conference is justified on many grounds - and not only because it is under the aegis of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. With the largest regional population on Earth, with its high levels of technological achievement, and with large economies with enormous growth potential -- who can deny that this region will leave its mark on the future of the world in the century ahead?

The issues to be addressed at this conference are important because the countries in this region face many common futures -- futures that will be inevitably influenced by the fate of efforts in the field of disarmament and international security. Not one future, but many possible futures -- dealing with economic issues, military affairs, sociological and cultural issues associated with globalization, and futures relating to the stewardship of the natural environment. While no one can possibly predict the outcome of these various alternative futures, who can credibly deny today that each of these futures will be significantly influenced by the outcome of developments in the field of disarmament and international peace and security?

**Security and Disarmament in the Asia-Pacific Region**

Despite its enormous potential for global leadership in making the world a safer and more prosperous place for all, this region will never fully be able to assume this role until it succeeds in constraining the kinds of forces that throughout history have prevented peaceful international cooperation. I am referring to the forces of unbridled nationalism, the temptation to seek solutions to security problems through unilateral actions, skepticism about the value of multilateral organizations, and other challenges to disarmament that are by no means unique to this region. Perhaps the most difficult hurdle ahead will be to convince governments and their citizens that a country's security is neither simply nor directly related to the quantity of arms it possesses. This conference will move us forward toward a concept of security that goes beyond the familiar, simple-minded method of piling weapons upon weapons.
In the decade following the end of the Cold War, global military expenditures followed a clearly downward trend, a trend that has only started to rise in the last three or four years. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's latest survey, the world is now spending around $800 billion for military purposes. SIPRI's chart for East Asia, however, shows a slow but steady increase throughout the last decade, to a level now approaching $100 billion (in constant 1998 dollars).

A similar troubling pattern is evident in SIRPI's data on the volume of transfers of major conventional weapons to the region. While global arms transfers have been dropping steadily since the end of the Cold War, the figures for both Northeast and Southeast Asia have shown an increase, a trend that current modernization and procurement plans suggest will likely continue, especially if economic growth materializes to finance new defence acquisitions.

The new annual survey of the global arms market issued last week by the US Congressional Research Service noted an 8 percent increase in this trade to a level of $36.9 billion in the year 2000. The study also found that the developing world continues to be the primary focus of foreign arms sales activity and that many Asian countries were among the most significant importers -- two of the top three arms importers in the developing world are in Asia. Yet the region may emerge in the years ahead as also a significant exporter of a growing variety of conventional arms to markets around the world. It must be noted here that Japan does not permit the export of arms to any country.

Soon we may find that more and more countries will be pursuing their security and economic interests increasingly through military rather than diplomatic means. What are the implications of these trends? It is not enough simply to attribute these developments to threat perceptions, though they surely are an important factor. We need to look more deeply into what is creating those perceptions. Is the demand for these arms rising because of supply-push factors -- such as the eagerness of countries with huge weapons inventories and excess production capacities to collect some return on their investments through exports? Or is this market responding to demand-pull pressures operating exclusively within the importing countries?

Regardless of the answers to these questions -- which will no doubt vary by country -- what is needed most from the international community are new efforts to define and alleviate the root causes of this recent growth in the supply and demand for arms, whether they be political, technological, economic, or bureaucratic in origin. Only then can we be sure that one country's exercise of its right of self defence is not its neighbour's casus belli.

The right to self defence is, of course, an inherent right under the UN Charter and a fundamental responsibility of sovereign states. Yet the Charter also envisions the emergence of a form of international peace and security that involves "the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources." Perhaps the most important challenge of all in the years ahead will be to ensure that the people and their leaders understand the full social, economic, political, and environmental costs of arms acquisitions in excess of legitimate national security.
I would like to stress at this point that the many futures of this region will not be determined solely by the actions or inactions of nation-states. It has become a truism these days to note how the many processes associated with "globalization" are extending across national boundaries virtually outside of significant government control -- this is particularly evident in the rapid evolution of the revolution in information technology. One can also safely predict that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) will also play a much more important role in this region in the decades ahead, even in the field of interational peace and security. I am pleased to report that several Asian NGOs -- from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville), Philippines, Japan, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia -- participated at the UN's recent Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms.

Such groups will play an important role in promoting public understanding and reinforcing the political will that will be needed to meet the challenge of what I call "sustainable disarmament." In brief, disarmament starts to become sustainable when the leaders and citizens of a country or a subregion conclude that human security can not only be preserved -- but enhanced -- by measures involving the reduction of excess weaponry, and the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. It moves further on the road to full sustainability when domestic laws and institutions reflect this reality -- and when the benefits and limited costs of disarmament and the peaceful settlement of disputes are taught in the schools and become deeply rooted in popular culture. That social contract is the basis for sustainable disarmament and a sine qua non for sustainable development.

Given its crucial importance both in the realms of economics and geopolitics, the Asia-Pacific region is well placed to demonstrate its collective leadership in promoting sustainable disarmament both regionally and globally. It can lead the way through the coordination of common positions on many key issues on the international security agenda. It can, for example, set for itself the following interim goals:

- full regional participation in the UN's Conventional Arms Register
- full regional use of the UN's standardized reporting instrument for military expenditures
- an agreement to adopt common positions on General Assembly disarmament resolutions
- entry into force of the CTBT through signature and/or ratification by Asia-Pacific states among the 44 stipulated in Article XIV
- agreements on missile nonproliferation and mutual restraints on missile programmes
- a common position on the need for global agreements on missile defence so as to prevent an arms race
- collective opposition to the weaponization of outer space
- confidence-building measures, including the increased transparency of military programmes

**Asia and Nuclear Disarmament**
Yet the area where Asia might be able to make its most impressive achievements in the next century concerns its efforts on behalf of global nuclear disarmament. Asia's tragic inauguration to the atomic age began with two nuclear explosions in 1945. How fitting it would be if the region that was the first nuclear target should also be the leader in promoting the next steps to an international order without such weapons.

The road ahead will of course not be easy, for the challenges are significant across Asia. New efforts are needed to rekindle progress on concluding a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia and to contain the new regional insecurities that emerged as a result of the nuclear-weapon tests in South Asia in 1998. The world urgently needs progress on de-legitimized the possession and acquisition of all nuclear weapons, not new models of a putative peace through nuclear deterrence.

Yet the developments in Asia have not all been negative. After the collapse of the USSR, Kazakhstan joined the NPT after closing its nuclear test site and returning former Soviet nuclear weapons to the Russian Federation. For its part, China has stopped testing nuclear weapons, signed the CTBT, reaffirmed its long-standing no-first-use policy, and pledged never to provide any assistance to any unsafeguarded nuclear facility. Japan has continued its unrelenting efforts on behalf of global nuclear disarmament goals. The efforts of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) under the Agreed Framework have succeeded in freezing the operations at sensitive fuel cycle facilities in the DPRK, while efforts continue to encourage the DPRK to comply with its international safeguards obligations. The creation in 1986 of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the South Pacific and, in 1997, of another such zone in Southeast Asia are important additional steps towards a nuclear-weapon-free world. Mongolia has declared its nuclear weapon free status and this is acknowledged in a UN General Assembly resolution.

**Conclusion**

Ladies and Gentlemen, if there is ever to be a global regime to prohibit the production or storage of weapons usable nuclear material, it will not happen without Asia. If the world expects to fulfill the long-sought dream of eliminating all nuclear weapons, it will not happen without Asia. If the world is ever to negotiate universally-binding norms against the proliferation of missiles or missile defense systems, it will not happen without Asia. And if the world is ever to see the day when military budgets are indeed prepared "with the least diversion for armaments of the world's human and economic resources," it will not happen without Asia.

Regardless of the issue -- whether it pertains to the threats from nuclear weapons, environmental degradation, or regional economic crises -- when problems sweep across national borders, there is no substitute for public understanding and support in addressing such problems. I encourage all participants in this conference never to forget that while intergovernmental cooperation will be crucial in addressing all these problems in the years ahead, civil society must play an active and direct role in addressing these problems as well. I
hope to see the day when governors and mayors like Mr. Tanimoto and Mr. Yamade will rise up in countries around the world and accept their own responsibilities to do what they can on behalf of world peace and prosperity.

You have some stimulating papers before you to trigger a productive dialogue. Please accept my very best wishes for a successful conference.