

## **Japanese Contributions to the G8 Global Partnership**

November 20, 2003

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to have the chance to share with you the Japanese contributions to the G8 Global Partnership here today. .

At the outset, let me remind you that Japan was one of the first states that joined the international efforts for the denuclearisation of states of the former Soviet Union. Based on the agreement reached at the Munich G 7 Summit in 1992, Japan promptly concluded agreements respectively with Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, and Belarus to extend assistance for the safe disposition of nuclear weapons. Bilateral committees were established under these agreements to receive financial contributions by the Japanese Government and to implement projects.

The first project with Russia was the construction of a liquid radioactive waste processing facility named "Suzuran," or Lilly of the Valley. The purpose of this facility was to treat liquid radioactive waste coming from the dismantlement of retired nuclear submarines in Far East Russia. The construction of "Suzuran" started in 1996 and was delivered to Russia in

November 2001.

When the G8 Global Partnership was proposed as a priority issue during the Kananakis Summit process in 2002., Prime Minister Koizumi committed to contribute a little more than 200 million dollars on the condition that the difficulties in the implementation, such as lack of coordination among agencies in Russia, insufficient communication between central and local authorities, difficult access to information and the site, insufficient protection against liability, and problems related to tax exemption, are removed.

## 2. Commencement of dismantlement of decommissioned nuclear submarines

In Far East Russia, more than 40 retired nuclear submarines are waiting for dismantlement. Some seem to be in good condition, but many are not. Therefore, dismantlement of these submarines is an urgent task to advance disarmament and nonproliferation and to protect the environment of the Sea of Japan. The cooperation in this field was a matter of great interest for the Japanese Government, but at the time of the Kananakis Summit, cooperation was virtually suspended due to difficulties in

implementation.

The G8 Global partnership that was agreed on at the Kananakis Summit was a strong incentive for Japan to resume cooperation.

In January 2003, Prime Minister Koizumi visited Russia, and the two Heads of State announced the “Japan-Russia Joint Program of Action”. This document specifically states that both countries agree to implement the dismantlement of decommissioned retired nuclear submarines in Far East Russia and to strengthen the implementation mechanism for that purpose. The Japanese Prime Minister named this project “Star of Hope” after the name of the shipyard “ Zvezda” meaning “Hope”.

In February 2003, both governments agreed to dismantle a Victor III class nuclear submarine as the first project after resumption of cooperation and to establish a joint task force to facilitate implementation. In late June 2003, Foreign Minister Kawaguchi visited the Zvezda Shipyard and, in her presence, the implementing arrangement was signed.

Finally, just one week ago, the financing contract and work contract were signed in Moscow, and approximately 5 million US Dollars will be disbursed for the implementation of the dismantlement of the Victor III

Class submarine.

The cooperation in the dismantlement of nuclear submarines is highly appreciated in both countries. On the Japanese side, a league of parliamentarians was established to support “Star of Hope” project in June 2003. This shows the increase of interest in this subject among the Japanese political leadership. It is unfortunate that the general election in Japan took place just 2 weeks ago, and none of the newly elected Parliament Member can be prepared to join the today’s meeting.

While progress was made, problems still remain. Coordination needs to be improved among agencies in Moscow and between the central government and local authorities. Tax exemption should be simplified, and protection against liability should be stronger. Access to the project site should be granted with shorter notice and related information should be more widely disclosed. As we are ready to be engaged in more complicated and important projects in the future, these problems will have to be overcome as soon as possible.

### 3. Disposition of Weapon-Grade Plutonium

The disposition of weapon-grade plutonium designated as no longer required for defense purposes is also an area of interest for Japan. Based on its historical experience, Japan has been calling for nuclear disarmament with the aim of total elimination of nuclear weapons. The disposition of plutonium is one of the concrete measures that contribute to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

As is well known, the United States and Russia reduced their strategic nuclear arsenal to the level of 5000 to 6000 with the implementation of START I. The Moscow Treaty signed, which entered into force this year, will bring the level down to 1700 to 2200 by 2012. While the Moscow Treaty is not perfect, the Japanese government welcomes it as a concrete step towards implementation of Article VI of NPT.

While reduction in deployed strategic nuclear weapons is a positive step, the weapons thus reduced could be refurbished as new weapons if they are not dismantled and fissile materials removed from them are not disposed of. In addition, they might fall into the hands of terrorists, if they are not well protected. For these reasons, the disposition of fissile material, particularly

plutonium, became an important issue.

Since 1999, the Japan Nuclear Cycle Development Institute has been undertaking research with RIAR, IPPE, and OKBM on the disposition of plutonium. Until now, they have fabricated three vibro-packed fuel assemblies containing 20kg of weapon-grade plutonium and irradiated them in the fast reactor, BN600. Another option proposed so far is to irradiate MOX fuel in light water reactors. We do not deny the merits of the latter option, but the disadvantage is that we need to wait years before starting. In contrast, if we adopt the Vibropack/BN 600 option as well as others, we can start the project sooner. It is no secret that Japan is interested in cooperating with Russia in this field.

The G8 Global Partnership that was agreed at the Kananakis Summit identified the disposition of plutonium as one of the four key areas. As a follow up, consultations are now taking place to decide on the framework of cooperation, including the technologies to be employed, after carefully examining technical and financial aspects. For the above reasons, we strongly hope that Vibropack/BN600 is adopted as one of the pillars under the G8 framework. We have no time to spare in the disposition of plutonium.

#### 4. Closing

G8 Global Partnership is a new and innovative approach in the history of disarmament and nonproliferation.

People often say that disarmament and nonproliferation has been stagnated since late 1990s, which is in our view the half-truth. We should not close our eyes to the fact that there are also new trends such as the G8 Global Partnership, Hague Code of Conduct, and Proliferation Security Initiative. These new schemes are valuable and effective instruments contributing greatly to enhancement of our security environment.

Japan is firmly committed to the G8 Global Partnership. It is also convinced that good record of project implementation is the strongest incentive to continue and expand this initiative.

Thank you very much.