

Statement on the agenda item 4
International cooperation in combating transnational crime,
New challenges in the twenty-first century

Your Excellency, the president of the Congress,
Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentleman,

It is indeed a great honor for me to have this opportunity to speak at this Congress, on the agenda of the international cooperation in combating transnational organized crime, on behalf of the Delegation of Japan.

Needless to say, transnational organized crime is one of the most serious concerns of the global community. The globalisation of the society and the innovation of the information technologies, which are believed to be the key to the prospective twenty-first century, have provided various opportunities not only to our society, but to criminal world as well. Now, the transnational organized crime, such as illicit trafficking in firearms or narcotic drugs, illegal economic activities including underground illegal banks and the smuggling of migrants, is becoming the serious threat not only to individual citizens' safety, but also to the democratic society and the global market economy.

There is a strong need for all countries to cope with this problem together.

In these regards, my Government is committed to cooperate actively with other countries to deal with this global issue in a spirit of efficacy and solidarity.

First, most notably, Japan has been committed to the work of the United Nations in its endeavours to fight against transnational organized crime, including the elaboration of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, and two other Protocols. Japanese Government believes that those instruments should be the new basis for the international community to fight against the problem. Japan, in its effort to expedite the process of negotiations, has been rendering specific contributions to this process, both by making financial contributions, and by organizing meetings which address the issues related to the technical questions amongst other countries concerning the Convention and the Protocols. I would like to reiterate my Government's firm determination and commitment to continue to take an active part in the negotiation of the Convention and the Protocols in order to ensure that these instruments will be adopted by the end of this year.

Second, within the fabric of the eight industrialized countries, Japan has exerted itself for participation in the G8 Senior Experts Group on Transnational Organized Crime, which is usually referred to as the Lyon Group, the presidency of which Japan holds this year.

Thirdly, Japan has also been committing itself to the efforts to enhance the Asia Pacific regional cooperation in the fight against transnational organized crime, by organizing seminars and conferences to provide opportunities for exchanging information and experiences among the law enforcement officers and other criminal justice officers in the region, in order to foster regional cooperation. The subjects of those regional seminars and conference which are being organized regularly by the relevant authorities of the Japanese Government include: measures for organized crime; drug law enforcement; maritime law enforcement; firearms control; smuggling of migrants; trafficking in persons, and immigration control. And, in order to bring its activities in line with the agenda of the United Nations, the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) has decided to organize a series of international training courses and seminars, under the broad, far reaching subject of "transnational organized crime".

Finally, also in line with those ongoing efforts and with a view to promoting the synergy among those efforts in the various fields of the fight against transnational organized crimes, the National Police Agency and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are planning to hold, in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, "The Asia-Pacific Law Enforcement Conference against Transnational Organized Crime", tentatively scheduled at the beginning of 2001. This Conference is expected to be an occasion for senior officials of law enforcement agencies from various countries to discuss and exchange views on how to promote international law enforcement cooperation in the fight against organized crime in the Asia-Pacific region, thus contributing to international endeavours in this field, most notably the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and three Protocols, which are to be finalized by the end of this year.

Thank you for your attention.