Mr. Chairman,

The people of Japan have firmly committed themselves to the goal of realizing the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Prime Minister Hatoyama stated at the Security Council summit on 24 September that Japan has chosen to walk a path of non-nuclear weapons to prevent the vicious cycle of an arms race. As a country that has suffered from atomic bombings and has chosen the path of non-nuclear weapons, I would like to say again that possessing nuclear weapons per se should not grant states any political advantages in international politics.

Mr. Chairman,

This year Japan will once again submit a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament to the First Committee entitled, “Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.” Japan finds it greatly encouraging that each year a high number of supporting votes are cast by UN Member States, including some nuclear-weapon States. I would like to call upon the General Assembly to adopt this important resolution by an overwhelming majority.

Reducing the number of existing nuclear weapons is the first and foremost priority for the international community. Japan requests the Russian Federation and the United States to implement fully the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (SORT), and to undertake nuclear arms cutbacks beyond those provided for in that Treaty. From this
perspective, Japan wishes to commend the Russian Federation and the United States for their efforts to negotiate a legally binding successor to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), which will expire in December. We call upon both states to continue their intensive negotiations with a view to concluding them as soon as possible.

On the other hand, the other nuclear-weapon-States should not wait for the Russian Federation and the United States to initiate cutbacks; they too have the responsibility to take steps to stop increasing their nuclear arsenals and to reduce them. Progress in ensuring transparency and in disclosing information would enable confidence building, creating a cycle for further nuclear disarmament.

Japan would also like to voice its appreciation for the historic and timely convening of the United Nations Security Council summit on nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. The resolution adopted at the summit addressed the significant challenges in these areas. I believe that the world has now arrived at the stage where it should consider more specifically a practical approach to nuclear disarmament, whereby international stability will be preserved both in establishing the goal of the world without nuclear weapons as well as in the process of attaining it, while the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation being maintained and even enhanced.

The creation of a nuclear weapon free zone, when coordinated between the five nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States in the region, would also contribute to nuclear non-proliferation, and consequently to global and regional peace and security. In this context, Japan welcomes the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty and the Central Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone Treaty. Japan also supports the establishment of a Middle East free zone of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons.

When we advance nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, we must address the issues related to the DPRK. The DPRK’s development of nuclear and missile programs is a serious threat to the peace and security of not only the Northeast Asia but also the international community as a whole, and cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. It is imperative that the DPRK comply fully with the relevant Security Council resolutions and that all the Member States implement these resolutions without delay. Japan will continue its efforts to realize the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks.
Mr. Chairman,

On our way to further nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of a very high priority. It is crucial that we work intensively to promote the early entry into force of the CTBT, particularly in the lead up to the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We once more strongly encourage the states that have yet to sign and/or ratify the CTBT, especially the nine Annex 2 States, to do so without delay. Japan was encouraged by the commitment of the U.S. Government to pursue ratification of the treaty. In addition, until entry into force, it is important for the nuclear-weapon States and states that are not party to the NPT to fully respect the moratorium on nuclear test explosions.

If the CTBT is to cap the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, then a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) is to cut the quantitative expansion. An FMCT has been on the Conference on Disarmament (CD) agenda for more than 10 years and has been a major global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation issue for more than 40 years. Japan welcomed the adoption by consensus of the CD’s programme of work on May 29, which included a mandate to commence negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosives devices. Although it was disappointing that the Conference was unable to start negotiating during its 2009 session, Japan strongly hopes the CD will adopt its programme of work at the beginning of next year and commence substantive work early in its 2010 session, including negotiations on an FMCT.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan does not subscribe to the argument that we should push nuclear non-proliferation ahead of nuclear disarmament or vice versa. They are two wheels of the same cart. Furthermore, the peaceful use of nuclear energy is another pillar of the NPT. All these three aspects of the NPT need to be considered in a balanced manner. In this connection, we cannot stress enough the significance of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. Even though the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee was unable to agree on recommendations, it did manage to expeditiously adopt the agenda and all significant procedural decisions for the Review Conference. The positive atmosphere
under which the work of the Third Preparatory Committee was carried out also gives us hope for a productive and substantive Review Conference in May next year.

Lastly, let me touch upon the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, which was launched under the joint initiative of Japan and Australia. The Commission has been holding meetings and consultations around the world throughout the year including in Sydney, Washington D.C., Santiago, Beijing, Moscow, Cairo and New Delhi, and it will be convening its final meeting this month in Hiroshima. I am confident that the Commission will come up with an action-oriented report out of its activities that will help our constructive deliberations in advance of the 2010 NPT Review Conference and beyond.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan remains committed to make its utmost contribution in the on-going efforts for global nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in close cooperation with other Member States.

Thank you.