Mr. Chairman,

Today, the growing momentum in nuclear disarmament is capturing the world’s attention, but the problems surrounding conventional weapons are no less significant. Japan has been tackling these issues through a comprehensive approach, in which we give due consideration to the mutual relevance among the issues of disarmament, humanitarian concerns, and development inclusively.

Mr. Chairman,

I would first like to draw attention to the topical issue of cluster munitions. Having in mind the humanitarian problems caused by cluster munitions, Japan has been actively engaged in the work of the Oslo process as well as the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) in order to address the problems.

Japan congratulated the opening for signature of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), and swiftly ratified the CCM in July this year. We urge more countries to ratify this convention expeditiously. On the other hand, Japan attaches importance also to the creation of an effective and meaningful international legal instrument within the framework of the CCW, in which major producers and possessors of cluster munitions are involved. The Oslo Convention and the CCW should be complementary to each other, both promoting hand in hand the same objective of eliminating cluster munitions.
In this respect, it was extremely disappointing that an agreement could not be reached at the informal meeting of the Group of Governmental Experts in August this year. To maintain the ongoing negotiations with the political will to come to an agreement is the duty of the responsible members of the CCW.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan also places great significance on the continuing struggle by the international community against the severe problem of anti-personnel mines. We should seize the opportunity of the Second Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in Cartagena next month to further bolster our work in solving the landmine issues.

To the states that are still outside the convention, Japan urges them to seriously consider their accession to it. Japan is promoting the universalization of this convention, particularly in the Asia Pacific region, by conducting talks with and making demarches to the relevant countries while paying respect to their different circumstances.

In the area of assistance to mine and cluster munitions victims, Japan has granted over 380 million dollars in aid since 1998, and last year alone we contributed 32 million dollars in support. For example, we granted 6.7 million dollars to assist mine and unexploded ordnance clearance activities in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Chad, and 3 million dollars to support activities to revive the economy of areas affected by cluster munitions in Lebanon, and provided three mine clearance machines to Cambodia.

Mr. Chairman,

Hereafter, one of our biggest challenges and responsibilities will be to solidify the initiative on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT). Japan has consistently backed an ATT, which will ensure the responsible transfer of arms. It is to be commended that many countries constructively participated in the discussions at the Open-Ended Working Group and adopted by consensus the report which affirmed the necessity of further international efforts.
Japan along with the UK, Argentina, Australia, Costa Rica, Finland, and Kenya, submitted a draft resolution that decides to convene a United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012. Japan is ready to contribute to deepening our deliberations towards the creation of the highest possible legally binding, common international standards within the UN. As the draft resolution clearly describes this vision, we call for all the Member States to extend their support to it.

Mr. Chairman,

Another priority issue of conventional weapons for Japan is small arms and light weapons. Japan together with South Africa and Colombia has once again submitted a draft resolution on this issue, and we would like to invite all the Member States to support it and further strengthen the implementation of the UN Programme of Action (PoA).

To mention a few examples of our concrete actions in small arms and light weapons, from this year Japan has been helping Liberia in such areas as infrastructure, community support, public security, arms reduction program and capacity building of the national police.

Furthermore, at a peacekeeping training centre in Ghana, Japan has been assisting a program on the management of small arms for the capacity-building of officials in West Africa. Continuing these actions and sharing the lessons and experiences will help further strengthen the implementation of PoA. In this context, the fourth biennial meeting of States next year is a good opportunity for such exchanges, particularly with civil society, which plays an important role. Japan would like to express its gratitude to the Mexican chair-designate for his energetic preparations for the fourth meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Another important issue I would like to mention is the UN Register of Conventional Arms. For many years, the Group of Governmental Experts on the UN Register has discussed the inclusion of small arms and light weapons as a main category of the Register. It was extremely disappointing that the GGE was unable to reach consensus on this matter in 2009. The recommendation of this year’s GGE urges each country to submit their views on the categorization of small arms. We hope that our discussions will make good progress without waiting for a three-year review.
Mr. Chairman,

I would like to mention here that Japan has been taking an unique and strict policy of prohibiting the export of any arms in principle. Conventional weapons are a cause of many conflicts around the world and take the lives of many people. Japan has been working in rule making, aid for development and victim assistance. The international community including civil society needs to make progress in addressing the various challenges by building up our joint efforts. Japan, for its part, remains committed to making its utmost contribution.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.