Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

As the newly appointed Japanese Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, it is my honor to deliver this statement to the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly. I would like to begin by expressing my congratulations to you, Ambassador Jarmo Viinanen of Finland, on your assumption of the chairmanship of this committee and I assure you of my delegation’s full support.

Before I properly start this general statement, on behalf of the Japanese people I wish to express our sincere gratitude to the support that we have received from all over the world in the wake of the massive earthquake and tsunamis and the resulting accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Stations of the Tokyo Electric Power Company.
Mr. Chairman,

More than one year has elapsed since the successful conclusion of the 2010 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which adopted a Final Document that included a comprehensive Action Plan covering all pillars of the NPT. That agreement now serves as a focal point for the pursuit of international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Indeed, at last year’s First Committee there was a great deal of discussion on how to carry out the actions contained within the Final Document. To this end, Japan submitted a new resolution on nuclear disarmament entitled “United Action towards the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons”, which focused on the steady implementation of the 2010 agreement. Our intention was that this resolution would serve as a pace-setter for nuclear disarmament activities. This year Japan, along with many co-sponsors, will once more table this resolution with some updates, and we strongly hope that it receives the overwhelming support again of the UN members.

Mr. Chairman,

Looking now to the events since the last First Committee, there have been some notable developments that should be highlighted.

Last September Japan and nine other like-minded countries decided to launch a cross-regional group that we have called the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI), which aims to build on the momentum generated out of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. This year a ministerial meeting was held in Berlin in April and another in New York last month. At our meeting in Berlin, we formulated four concrete proposals for action on key elements of the NPT Review Conference Action Plan. In particular, we undertook, in accordance with Action 21 of that Plan, to develop a draft standard nuclear
disarmament reporting form as a contribution to discussions among the nuclear weapon states, which we shared with the P5. As we underlined in our statement from our third ministerial meeting, we look forward to contributing further on nuclear disarmament transparency as part of our efforts to encourage progress on this issue.

There are also positive developments among the nuclear-weapon states. In February the Russian Federation and the United States brought into force the New START Treaty. Japan welcomes the ongoing implementation by Russia and the US of the New START Treaty and encourages them to continue discussions on follow-on measures.

We would like to also welcome the first P5 follow-up meeting to the NPT Review Conference in Paris, where the issues of transparency and mutual confidence, among other things, were discussed. Japan hopes that the P5 countries continue to engage, in an open and transparent manner, with the non-nuclear-weapon states in promoting the implementation of the NPT Action Plan.

Mr. Chairman,

Despite these positive developments, we should note with deep concern that the Conference on Disarmament failed to commence negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) during its 2011 session in the face of the 2010 NPT Review Conference’s call and last year’s First Committee resolution. We understand the strong wish of many UN member states to start discussing a grand plan to abolish nuclear weapons. Japan, as the only country to have suffered from the atomic bomb, is strongly committed to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and we strongly share this wish. At the same time, however, we recognize that nuclear abolition cannot be realized over night. It is for this reason that we continue to assert that the next logical step for nuclear disarmament is an
FMCT. At last year’s High Level Meeting in New York, Japan said, “If there is no emerging prospect of launching negotiations on an FMCT within the CD, Japan, together with like-minded countries, is ready to take the initiative to provide a venue for the negotiations.” Currently many countries are considering possible concrete steps to be taken in order to start negotiations. But in the search for a way forward we must not deceive ourselves by indulging in endless and futile debates or in false hopes. What we must consider is practical measures that will lead to negotiations and that can be agreed to by responsible stakeholders.

Another disturbing development is DPRK’s continued development of nuclear and missile programs, including its uranium enrichment program, which is a violation of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. Japan calls upon all states to fully implement the resolutions, while urging the DPRK to comply with its international obligations, including to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner.

As regards the Iranian nuclear issue, it is indispensable for Iran to wipe off all the suspicions from the international community and to win its confidence. Japan will continue to act in concert with the international community for peaceful and diplomatic settlement of this issue.

Concerning the Syrian nuclear issue, Japan strongly hopes that Syria will fully cooperate with the IAEA and that the relevant facts will be clarified.

Let me also touch upon disarmament and non-proliferation education. Through education, the general public needs to be made well aware of the tragic consequences of the use of nuclear weapons and the significance of their disarmament and non-proliferation. During the disarmament week on the 26th, Japan will hold a side event entitled “Testimony of Hibakusha (atomic bomb survivors)” in cooperation with the UN ODA. At the event,
“Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons” will send out messages to the world, which only those who had the first-hand experience can convey.

Mr. Chairman,

The area of conventional weapons has been witnessing positive movements. Japan strongly welcomes this trend and we are determined to engage fully and constructively in all related processes.

As one of the original sponsors of the resolution on an Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) Japan has been an ardent supporter of the ATT process. The establishment of a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons is an urgent task and we are pleased with the progress made so far in the pre-negotiation stage. Japan urges all states to redouble their efforts in order to create a robust treaty at the UN Conference next June.

With respect to small arms and light weapons, the Review Conference on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms will be held next year, which will present a great opportunity to examine progress made in its implementation. Japan appreciates the early designation of Nigeria as the chair of the Review Conference and will work closely with the chair and Member States for a successful outcome. During this Committee, Japan, together with Colombia and South Africa, will table a draft-resolution on small arms and light weapons as we have done so for many years. We call on all member states to extend their support to the draft-resolution and hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Turning our attention now to the matter of biological weapons, this December the Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) will be held in
Geneva. At the previous BWC Review Conference various actions to be taken by the states parties were agreed to, and this year it is time to take stock of those efforts and to examine next steps. Japan will be working together with States Parties including JACKSNNZ partners to contribute to the success of this conference.

Mr. Chairman,

When we look at disarmament as a whole, we can observe that there has been some progress. However, this progress has been slow. There is still no prospect of the deadlock being broken in the Conference on Disarmament, which is said to be the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community. It is impossible for us to ignore those areas where progress is lacking. Now is the moment for us to seriously consider a way out. And Japan is ready to proactively contribute to the deliberations to this end.

I thank you for your attention.