Mr. Chairman,

When we discussed this topic here last year, many of us expressed our great anticipation for the upcoming events related to conventional arms and our hope for their successful outcome. Now, with twelve months behind us, we can see that certain advances were made in this field, though not to the extent that we had wished for. Given today’s opportunity, I would like to share with this Committee Japan’s assessment on the achievements of the past year in the field of conventional arms, and I’d also like to elaborate our thoughts on potential further steps.

Mr. Chairman,

As for the Arms Trade Treaty, Japan shares the disappointment that we could not finalize our work and adopt a text of legally binding treaty at the July UN Conference. However, we intensively discussed the elements of the treaty throughout the four weeks of meetings, and we developed a common understanding about most of the elements of the future ATT. Furthermore, in the last week of the conference, we also negotiated based on a full draft treaty text. While Japan finds further work is necessary to improve the 26 July text from a legal perspective, it needs to be acknowledged that the achievement of a robust Arms Trade Treaty is very nearly within our grasp. Six years have gone by since the co-authors of the ATT resolution, which includes Japan, took the lead in this process. And we are pleased to see that things have moved to the point where we will soon be able to finalize our work. Japan would like to sincerely thank the president of the July
Conference, Ambassador Roberto Garcia Moritan for guiding us along this long path to the threshold of a new international legal instrument.

Having said that we need to be mindful that people continue to suffer due to the absence of commonly agreed international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. Therefore, time is of the essence and we need to get back to work without delay. We have to build on the progress we made at the July conference and conclude our negotiations as soon as possible. The 26 July text is the consolidation of our efforts so far and it must be the basis for our future work.

Based on this, last week seven co-authors, including Japan, of the ATT resolutions tabled to this Committee another draft resolution on the ATT. The draft resolution provides a mandate for the two-week UN Conference in March next year to finalize the elaboration of the ATT. We call on all member states to support this draft resolution and hope that it will be adopted by consensus. Moreover, we call on all Member States to engage constructively in the negotiations at the March Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Every year small arms and light weapons take away the lives of hundreds of thousands worldwide. As such, it is crucial for the UN to remain fully engaged in this issue. Japan strongly welcomes the adoption by consensus of the outcome documents at the Second Review Conference on the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe that these documents will serve as an important tool for implementing the PoA on the ground for the next six years. I would like to congratulate the president of the conference, Ambassador Joy Ogwu, and the four facilitators for their work to bring about the successful conclusion of that conference.

As was shared among all states at the Review Conference, Japan believes it is important to identify specific topics to be discussed well in advance of future PoA meetings and to ensure the participation of relevant experts at such meetings. Taking into account that eleven years have passed since the adoption of the PoA, we need to put more focus on concrete steps that we should take for curbing small arms-related problems, rather than spending time on general exchanges of views. Japan is keen to continue its involvement in the future PoA process, including the Biennial Meeting of States in 2014 and the Meeting of Governmental Experts in 2015. We look forward to working closely with other states and civil society for the preparation of these meetings.
On the same topic, last week Japan together with Colombia and South Africa, as we have done for over a decade, submitted to this Committee a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons. In that resolution we renew our determined will to prevent, combat, and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons and we put forward a roadmap for the follow-up to the PoA and the outcome documents of the Second Review Conference. We appeal to each Member State to extend its support to this resolution and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Chairman,

Cluster munitions as well as anti-personnel landmines are major causes of serious humanitarian harm, and we must persist in our efforts to tackle the problems associated with these weapons. As a state party to the Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions, Japan is committed to the full implementation of both conventions.

We are deeply concerned by the reported use of cluster munitions. The use of these weapons by any actor is entirely unacceptable, since they not only pose grave dangers and harm to civilians during and after conflicts, but can also leave a lasting socio-economic impact for many years or even decades. This leads on to why we believe it is so important that the two conventions become universal. Through the implementation of treaty obligations such as stockpile destruction, it can be assured that cluster munitions and anti-personnel landmines would never be used in the future. I would like to reiterate Japan’s call to all those states that are not parties to these two conventions to accede to them as soon as possible and join our collective efforts towards ending the suffering caused by these weapons.

International cooperation and assistance is another key area for addressing humanitarian problems caused by anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions. Since 1998, Japan has extended to 42 countries approximately 468 million U.S. dollars in aid for landmine, cluster munitions, and UXO clearance activities, risk education, and victim assistance projects. Japan is committed to continuing this support and contributing to curbing the humanitarian problems caused by these weapons and others.

I thank you.