Mr. Chairman,

With respect to the specific issues on safety and security of peaceful nuclear programmes, I would like to touch upon importance of protection against nuclear terrorism and physical protection, and nuclear safety related issues.

1. Protection against nuclear terrorism

Protection against nuclear terrorism is a common goal of the international community. Strict control of nuclear material and large radiation sources are essential from the onset. We also reiterate that more stringent control of nuclear materials through the application of additional protocols and the export control of nuclear-related materials and equipment are also effective measures for the protection against terrorism.

As concrete measures to protect against nuclear terrorism, we believe that, first, strengthening the physical protection system in nuclear facilities and improving the accounting and control of
nuclear materials, which improve detection capability of illicit trafficking, are essential. Second, reinforcement of border control for such materials is also important. The primary responsibility for these activities against nuclear terrorism rests with the individual states. However, additional international cooperation and assistance are also required in order to strengthen protection activities. In this sense, the role of the Agency is vital. We attach importance to the IPPAS (International Physical Protection Advisory Service) mission by the IAEA and we would like to request that their role be expanded and improved. My government commits itself to contribute to these activities, and to support regions where the control and protection of nuclear and other radioactive materials is insufficient.

I would like to reiterate that my government strongly supports the collective work by the international community against terrorism. In this sense, we supported the Agency’s comprehensive plan of activities against nuclear terrorism, which was approved at the March board. At the board meeting, I announced our contribution of US$ 500,000 to the Agency’s activities to protect against nuclear terrorism, to meet the Agency’s need for expeditious action. We would like to appeal to other states to join our efforts.

2. Physical Protection

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to point out the importance of an international legal framework for the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities. We would like to call upon those states that have yet adhered to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials to do so. Technical and legal experts have been engaged in intensive discussions on the draft amendment to strengthen the convention, which has been accelerated since the terrorist attacks on September 11 last year. The amendment is an important step towards the protection against nuclear terrorism. We hope these efforts can be finalized at the earliest possible date and expect to convene the conference of states parties for the amendment of the convention within this year. Japan continues to support this task.

In the amendment of the convention, we believe that, in order to make the physical protection system in each state more effective, it is important to secure flexible application of protection measures that take state-specific features into account.
3. Nuclear Safety

Mr. Chairman,

Ensuring nuclear safety is an essential prerequisite for the peaceful use of nuclear energy to which we attach great importance. In order to spread and ingrain the idea of a “safety culture” into the nuclear energy field, we believe building a regional system to share knowledge and experience in safety will enhance nuclear safety performance not only in countries in the region but also globally. I would like to express the readiness of my government to work together with the IAEA on this initiative toward the global nuclear safety network. We would like to continuously contribute to increasing the prevalence of the safety culture, together with the IAEA, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

I expect fruitful results from the second Review Meeting of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, which is being held in Vienna from April 15, and enhances global nuclear safety performance through the peer review process by the Contracting Parties. We would also like to request the countries that have not yet done so, to conclude the convention as soon as possible.

I recognize that promoting the conclusion of the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management is important for the enhancement of nuclear safety performance. We are currently accelerating the internal work toward its conclusion. In order to enable better waste safety management, I also call upon other states to accept the Amendments to Annexes to the Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter, 1972 concerning phasing out sea disposal of industrial waste.

4. Transportation of Radioactive Materials

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to give the assurance of my Government that the transportation of radioactive materials relating to Japan is carried out in a safe and secure manner in strict conformity with the international standards, including the standards for safety and physical protection, established by the relevant international organizations such as the IAEA and the IMO.
In this connection, we welcome the IAEA conference on the safe transport of radioactive material, which will be held in July 2003, where these safety standards will be reviewed and areas of possible improvement will be discussed and identified. The Technical Programme Committee Meeting for the conference was held last March. It was agreed that the purpose of the conference is to discuss technical and scientific questions concerning safety and to establish confidence in the safe transport of radioactive materials with participation of other relevant international organizations. We strongly hope that the conference will further promote the understanding of the safety of radioactive material transport.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.