Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

Japan is firmly convinced that nuclear devastation should never be repeated. Japan has submitted a resolution entitled “A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons” at each session of the General Assembly since 2000. These resolutions outline concrete steps that should be taken towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, based on the 2000 Review Conference agreements, and call on the international community to promote nuclear disarmament.

The NPT obligates the nuclear-weapon States to pursue nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of their nuclear weapons should be achieved through the full implementation of article VI. The decision by an overwhelming majority of countries to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons was an epoch-making event in the international efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The nuclear-weapon
States should seriously take such resolution determination of non-nuclear-weapon States by demonstrating tangible progress towards nuclear disarmament.

In this regard, it should be recalled the decision in 1995 to extend the NPT indefinitely was an integral package with the adoption of "Principles and Objectives," which stressed the promotion of nuclear disarmament. Also, 2000 Review Conference agreed on "an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States parties are committed under article VI (para 6) in 13 Steps. We urge all the nuclear-weapon States to make further efforts towards total elimination of nuclear weapons.

1. Reduction of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States

Japan welcomes the progress achieved by the nuclear-weapon States on the reduction of their nuclear weapons, particularly the entry into force of the Treaty on Strategic Offensive Reductions (the Moscow Treaty) between the United States and Russia in June of last year. It should serve as a step towards further nuclear disarmament. Japan highly values the Moscow Treaty as stipulating, in a legally binding form, the reduction of the strategic nuclear weapons which the United States and Russia had respectively declared, and hopes for full implementation of the Treaty by both States.

Japan believes that all nuclear-weapon States should reduce their nuclear arsenals. It hopes that the other nuclear-weapon States will undertake, whether unilaterally or through negotiations, further reductions in their nuclear arsenals,
without waiting for the implementation of reductions to be undertaken by the United States and Russia. In this regard, Japan hopes that the nuclear-weapon State(s), which has (have) not taken such measures so far, will do so immediately.

2. Non-strategic nuclear weapons

Reducing non-strategic nuclear weapons is crucially important for regional and international security, as well as for non-proliferation and counter-terrorism. All states that possess non-strategic nuclear weapons should undertake measures to reduce them in accordance with the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Furthermore, Japan hopes that the U.S. and the Russian Federation will implement their initiatives on the reduction of their non-strategic nuclear forces completely and on a voluntary basis, as declared in 1991 and 1992, and provide data on the status of implementation of these initiatives.

3. Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty

The CTBT, together with the IAEA safeguards, plays a significant role as one of the major pillars of the NPT regime and is a practical and concrete measure towards realizing a nuclear-weapon-free world. It is regrettable that the CTBT has not yet entered into force, although it has been signed by 171 countries and ratified by 112 states since its adoption in 1996.

The early entry into force of the CTBT is a matter of extreme importance and urgency. Allowing such a stalemate to continue may negatively impact the NPT regime. Japan has been actively calling on all States that have not yet signed and...
ratified the CTBT. In particular those States whose ratification is required in order for the Treaty to enter into force, to sign and ratify the Treaty on bilateral occasions as well as in multilateral fora. The aforementioned UN resolution, sponsored by Japan, which underlines the importance of the early entry into force of the CTBT was once again adopted by an overwhelming majority at the 58th session of the UN General Assembly in 2003. Our Minister for Foreign Affairs, Yonko Kawaguchi, attended the Third Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in September 2003 to make a strong personal appeal in that regard.

In addition, all Member States should continue to cooperate in the efforts by the CTBTO Preparatory Commission to establish a nuclear-test-ban verification regime, including the International Monitoring System (IMS). As part of the establishment of the IMS, the construction of domestic monitoring facilities in Japan has been steadily progressing under the supervision of the CTBT National Operations System. For our part, Ambassador Yukio Takasu, Permanent Representative of Japan to the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, who was elected chairman of the Commission for 2004, has been making every effort towards the realization of the CTBT’s early entry into force.

Japan firmly believes that, pending the entry into force of the CTBT, all countries should maintain their political will to continue their moratoriums on nuclear weapon test explosions or nuclear-explosions of any other kind. Also, it must be recalled once again that in paragraph 3 of its resolution 1172 (1998), the Security Council called on all countries to refrain from carrying out any nuclear weapon test explosions or nuclear explosions of any other kind in accordance with the provisions of the CTBT.
4. Fissile material cut-off treaty

It is truly regrettable that, despite the conclusions of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not yet commenced negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). Such negotiations must be initiated without delay. All states, including the nuclear-weapon States, should maintain their political will to continue their moratoriums on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, pending the entry into force of the FMCT.

Placing a global ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons is the most effective way to prevent proliferation. Also it will enhance transparency and accountability in the management of such materials through its verification system. Thus, the FMCT will be an essential building block towards the total elimination of nuclear arsenals and will also contribute to the prevention of nuclear proliferation.

As a concrete contribution to the commencement of negotiations on the FMCT, Japan presented to the CD, on 14 August 2003, a working paper on the FMCT, with the goal of enhancing the discussions on the substantive issues of the FMCT and facilitating the early commencement of its negotiations.

Japan regards it as a principal task to reach agreement on a programme of work at the CD, thereby realizing the early commencement of negotiations on FMCT. Japan has been exercising its utmost efforts to resolve the current stalemate in the CD. Japan redoubled its efforts in this regard during its Presidency of the CD from 13
August to 31 December 2003: during this period, on 4 September, Yoriko Kawagushi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, appeared before the CD and appealed for the early resumption of substantive discussion in the CD, stressing the necessity and the urgency of the commencement of negotiations on the FMCT.

5. Assistance for denuclearization in Former Soviet States

Japan considers that taking one practical and concrete step after another is the only effective way to realize a safe and peaceful world free of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. Thus, Japan has been actively involved in a variety of areas, taking the following practical measures in assisting denuclearization in former Soviet States.

In June 2002, Japan announced its intention to make a contribution amounting to just over 200 million US dollars for the G8 Global Partnership, 100 million of which would be allocated to the disposition program for Russian surplus weapon-grade plutonium, and the rest to other projects such as the dismantlement of nuclear submarines.

With respect to the nuclear submarines, Japan has already extended assistance to Russia by providing a floating facility for the treatment of liquid radioactive waste. In December 2003 Japan and Russia launched the first project to dismantle a Victor III class decommissioned nuclear submarine. Regarding the management and disposition of Russian surplus weapon-grade plutonium, with the cooperation of Japan, twenty kilograms of weapon-grade plutonium, an amount sufficient for two or three nuclear warheads, was successfully disposed of with the
aid of advanced technology developed by Russian scientists, for the first time in the world.

6. Strengthening dialogue with civil society and future generations

I would like to stress the importance of disarmament and non-disarmament education. In the current unsettled security environment, there is a clear need to inform people of the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction and their disastrous consequences, as evidenced by the devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In order to advance disarmament and non-proliferation, it is essential to gain the understanding and support of the young people who will lead future generations, as well as of civil society as a whole.

Japan welcomes the Report of the Secretary-General entitled "United Nations study on disarmament and non-proliferation education," prepared by the Group of Governmental Experts on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education, which contains a set of practical recommendations in this field.

Japan has been making various efforts to contribute to the implementation of these recommendations, such as inviting disarmament experts and Hibakusha (atomic bomb victims), inviting young people to Hiroshima and Nagasaki as part of the UN Disarmament Fellowship Programme, organizing Citizen's Forum on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education in August, 2003, sponsoring the UN Conference on Disarmament Issues in various local cities of Japan since 1989, and holding a Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Seminar in March of this year. Japan's
efforts in this area are further elaborated in our working paper submitted to this PrepCom, which has been just distributed for your reference.

Japan, together with other co-sponsors, has also submitted a working paper on disarmament and non-proliferation education to this PrepCom. Japan encourages other States to support this working paper, and to voluntarily share information on efforts they have been undertaking in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation at the 2003 Review Conference.

7. Reporting

It is encouraging that more reports were submitted to the second Preparatory Committee than to the first Preparatory Committee, thereby contributing to the enhancement of transparency. Japan has submitted its comprehensive reports to the first and second session of the Preparatory Committee. Japan looks forward to seeing all States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, presenting reports on their efforts towards nuclear disarmament.