Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and a foundation for the promotion of nuclear disarmament. It has made an immense contribution to maintaining and strengthening international peace and security since its entry into force in 1970. The adoption of the Final Document at the 2000 Review Conference signified the unanimous realization among conference participants that the NPT regime must remain strong and credible. Given the current international security environment characterized by threats, such as the DPRK nuclear program, Dr. Khan’s underground network and the likelihood of terrorists obtaining weapons of mass destruction, Japan considers it crucial for the
States Parties to the NPT to unite and take effective action to deal with emerging challenges to the NPT regime, as well as making efforts to further strengthen the NPT regime as we approach the 2005 NPT Review Conference.

Ensuring compliance is essential to the full implementation of the Treaty. All Parties must faithfully comply with their obligations under the Treaty and fully cooperate with the IAEA, in order to allow this verification organization to fulfill its responsibilities. However, specific cases of non-compliance have been brought to an attention beginning in the early nineties. Failure to address and resolve such instances of non-compliance will directly undermine the credibility of the Treaty. In this regard, Japan is concerned about a few cases, including the DPRK’s declaration of its intention to withdraw from the NPT, as well as its refusal to accept the IAEA safeguards agreement. My delegation will elaborate on specific cases under the item of regional issues.

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, which is an important step towards further nuclear disarmament. Japan hopes for full implementation of the Treaty by both States.
Having said this, I must mention a few points which are important under the category of cluster 1. There still remain numerous nuclear weapons and arsenals in the world. Japan believes that all nuclear-weapon States should reduce their nuclear arsenals. We strongly hope 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 have not taken such measures so far, will do so immediately.

The CTBT has not yet entered into force. We regret this fact because we have already secured the signature by 171 countries and ratification by 112 states since its adoption in 1996. So many countries support it. The early entry into force of the CTBT is a matter of extreme urgency. We urge the countries which have not signed or ratified to do so as quickly as possible. Pending the entry into force of the CTBT, all countries should maintain their political will to continue their moratoriums on nuclear weapons test explosions or nuclear explosions of any other kind.

It is also cause for regret that the Conference on Disarmament (CD) has not yet commenced negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) despite the
Conclusion of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. 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.

Lastly, it is important to consider and discuss security assurances for non-nuclear weapon State Parties to the NPT, based on Security Council resolution 984 (1995) as well as the relevant declarations of nuclear-weapon States. From this viewpoint, Japan supports the idea that a programme of work, including the establishment of an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances, will be agreed upon at the Conference on Disarmament.