Explanation of Vote by Ambassador Kunio Inoguchi
on “Follow-up to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice
on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons”
(A/C.1/38/L.31)

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I would like to explain Japan’s position on the vote on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/38/L.31, entitled, “Follow-up to the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice on the Legality of the Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons.”

Mr. Chairman,

First of all, we highly appreciate Malaysia’s sincere attitude and firm commitment to the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament, which led to the proposing of draft resolution L.31.

Japan also believes that, because of their immense power to cause destruction and death and injury to human beings, the use of nuclear weapons is clearly contrary to the fundamental humanitarianism which informs international law and provides its philosophical foundation. Therefore, we would like to stress that nuclear weapons should never be used again, and continuous efforts should be made towards achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

However, the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, which this draft resolution addressed, clearly demonstrates the complexity of the subject.

Japan supports the unanimous opinion of the judges of the ICJ on the existing obligation under international law to pursue nuclear disarmament and to conclude negotiations on the matter in good faith. Japan firmly believes that we must take concrete measures to achieve steady, step-by-step progress in nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

In this context, we believe it is premature to “call upon all the states immediately to
fulfill that obligation by commencing multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat or use of nuclear weapons”.

We believe that such steady, incremental progress should be made prior to our embarking upon the negotiations which resolution L.34 calls upon all states to commence. This is the reason for Japan’s abstention on this draft resolution.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Japan continues to encourage all efforts to advance nuclear disarmament.