Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished delegates,

At the outset, let me congratulate you, Ambassador De Alba, on your appointment as Chair of this Committee. I am confident that your vast experience and competent leadership will guide us through this session and I assure you of my delegation's full support as you carry out your important task.

The Committee is meeting this year in difficult times. The international community is facing serious challenges in the field of security and disarmament and non-proliferation, such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), the increasing threat of international terrorism and of WMD falling into the hands of terrorists, the proliferation of nuclear-related technology through Dr. Khan's extended underground nuclear proliferation networks, and compliance problems of individual countries, such as DPRK's nuclear program.

Although the international community is facing such challenges, it has also witnessed some progress in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. For instance, Libya's decision to abandon all of its WMD programs, the US's reaffirmation of its support for the commencement of FMCT negotiations, a steady increase in the number of countries which have ratified the CTBT, an increase in the number of countries which have signed the IAEA Additional Protocol as well as those countries in which the Protocol has come into force, the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1540 on non-proliferation, progress made in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), and strengthened non-proliferation efforts in the Asian region. Progress has also been made in the area of small arms and light weapons.

We must work together to find solutions to these problems, as well as to make further progress in disarmament and non-proliferation fields. The next NPT Review Conference is scheduled a little over six months from now, thus rendering special significance to the work of this year's First Committee. This Committee provides an important opportunity to maintain and strengthen the NPT regime, at a time when its viability has been put to the test in the face of various challenges. The successful conclusion of our
work here will contribute greatly to the success of next year’s Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to fulfill its role and adequately respond to the changing international security environment, strengthening the functioning of the First Committee is an urgent task. Resolution 58/41, submitted by the US last year, entitled “Improving the effectiveness of the methods of work of the First Committee,” was an important step forward in this regard. In this year’s First Committee, we must take last year’s discussion one step further towards implementation, beginning with those measures where there exists a convergence of views.

Japan is committed to the reform of the First Committee and we are ready to work closely with the Chair. Japan has recently submitted its views on reform to the UN Secretary-General, in accordance with Resolution 58/41, which we will explain in detail in the thematic discussion. It is also important to have action-orientated, substantial resolutions which could provide concrete steps aimed at resolving the problems currently faced by the international community. Furthermore, Member states must make serious efforts to implement resolutions.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan has been making active diplomatic efforts aimed at realizing a peaceful and safe world free of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. Japan, again this year, will submit a draft resolution entitled “A path to the total elimination of nuclear weapons,” reflecting recent developments and providing practical steps toward the elimination of nuclear weapons. We look forward to its adoption with the support of an overwhelming majority of Member states.

The most realistic and effective means of tackling various problems faced by the international community today is the strengthening and universalization of existing regimes and their full implementation. Japan considers international frameworks, such as the NPT, CTBT, IAEA Safeguards Agreements, IAEA Additional Protocol, BWC and CWC, of utmost importance as a basis for international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. While seizing every opportunity to reconfirm commitment to these
disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, it is also important to work toward the strengthening of their functioning, as well as their universalization and full implementation. Japan’s basic viewpoint and ensuing concrete steps in this regard will be explained further during the thematic debates.

In addition to the issue of WMD, steps should be taken by the international community to address the problems of small arms and light weapons (SALW) and anti-personnel land mines (APLMs) as a matter of priority. Disarmament and non-proliferation education is also essential to achieve progress in these areas. Japan will also present its views on these topics during the thematic debates.

Mr. Chairman,

I call upon all Member states to make maximum use of this security and disarmament forum, to work towards strengthening its functioning, and to show the international community that the multilateral disarmament and security regime is indeed functioning effectively and efficiently.

Thank you.