New York, 29 October 2008

Explanation of vote by the Head of the Delegation of Japan on behalf of the delegations of Austria, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malta, New Zealand, Sweden, and Switzerland

"Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia"
(A/C.1/63/L.37)

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to make a few remarks on the draft resolution contained in document A/C.1/63/L.37, entitled "Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia". I am making these remarks on behalf of the following eight delegations, which have all voted in favour of this resolution: Austria, Ireland, Japan, Liechtenstein, Malta, New Zealand, Sweden and Switzerland.

Our eight delegations regard the signing of the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia on 8 September 2006 as an effort to strengthen peace and stability in the region as well as a contribution to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Such a zone would be the first regional nuclear-weapon-free zone in the northern hemisphere and would encompass an area where previously nuclear weapons did exist.

As stipulated in the principles and guidelines of the 1999 UNDC report, it is important that the five nuclear-weapon states are consulted during the negotiations of each treaty establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This facilitates their signature to and ratification of the relevant protocol to such a treaty. In this regard, we take note of the expressed readiness of the five Central Asian States to continue consultations on a number of provisions of the Treaty. We will pay close attention to these future consultations among States directly concerned, as outlined in operative paragraph 2 of the resolution before us. This forward-looking approach is an important element towards the future role of the Treaty: the strengthening of peace and stability in the region. We encourage such consultations to take place as soon as possible in the hope that progress will be possible in the near future.

In this regard, we would like to encourage the C5 to keep countries with an interest in this process informed on the developments of their consultations.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.