Mr. Chairman,

Over this current year, we have witnessed some historic developments in the fields of disarmament and non-proliferation. However, the impetus behind is not self-perpetuating, but needs constant nurturing. Japan believes that education and public awareness are integral to promoting and propelling disarmament and non-proliferation efforts and forms the long-term basis for any concerted international initiative.

Education on disarmament and non-proliferation should be of two-way communication between civil society and government. For instance, Japan believes that it has the moral responsibility to make its utmost efforts to pass on the experiences of Hiroshima and Nagasaki to people all over the world and to the next generations. As Prime Minister Hatoyama said at the UN Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament on 24 September, all leaders of the world as well are encouraged to visit Hiroshima and Nagasaki and absorb with their own eyes and ears the cruelty of nuclear weapons. In this regard, every year since 1983, the Government of Japan invites young diplomats from around the world under the UN Disarmament Fellowship Program to those two cities, and thus far, we have hosted almost 700 diplomats involved in that program.

Furthermore, political leaders and government officials should also receive input from civil society, which is a fertile source of flexible thinking and innovative ideas. For example, delegations can learn a lot from the critical analysis found within the First Committee Monitor, which is published weekly by the NGOs who listen attentively to the delegations’ statements every day. We also hope that the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, co-chaired by Ms. Kawaguchi of Japan and Mr. Evans of Australia, which will issue its report early next year, will greatly contribute to our work in this field.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan along with 29 other countries delivered a joint statement on disarmament and non-proliferation education at this year’s Third Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference. In that statement we encouraged the implementation of the
recommendations contained within the UN Secretary General's 2002 report. I wish to reemphasize the significance of those recommendations and urge all Member States of the United Nations to put them into practice.

At the Third NPT Prep Com, in an effort to implement the recommendation of that report to cooperate with research institutions, Japan together with the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the Monterey Institute of International Studies hosted a seminar entitled "Practical Ways and Tools to Raise Public Awareness through Education and Its Role in Strengthening the NPT". Prominent academics, diplomats, educators, students and atomic bomb survivors took part and put forward their ideas, for example, the active use of UN Cyberschoolbus, for promoting education in the disarmament context.

Mr. Chairman,

In wrapping up my statement, I would like to say that while education and public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation is not as headline catching as nuclear weapon reductions, but it can be a way to make various ideas more possible and strengthen the disarmament and non-proliferation efforts by the international community. We should thus place greater emphasis on education and public awareness on disarmament and non-proliferation.

Thank you for your attention.