The Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations presents its compliments to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs and, with reference to the latter’s note number ODA/16-2017/NDV dated 20 February 2017, has the honour to transmit herewith Japan’s views on the resolution 71/67 entitled “Nuclear disarmament verification”, as requested.

The Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs the assurances of its highest consideration.

26 May 2017
Japan’s views on the development and strengthening of practical and effective nuclear disarmament verification measures and on the importance of such measures in achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons pursuant to UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/71/67

Summary
Japan strongly believes in the importance of studying potential verification measures and related activities, and in developing tools and technologies for verification in the nuclear disarmament process. Japan, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, has amassed highly advanced knowledge and technologies related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including robust safeguards technology, as well as expertise in on-site inspections of relevant arms control and disarmament instruments including the Chemical Weapons Convention. This knowledge can contribute to discussions on nuclear disarmament verification.

The following considerations are necessary in studying and developing practical and effective measures on nuclear disarmament verification: a) effectiveness of verification; b) protection of proliferation-sensitive information; c) safety of personnel, such as inspectors, and of items to be verified, such as nuclear materials and related facilities; d) contribution to confidence-building; and e) importance of constructing the most effective verification system possible while still considering its efficiency.

The three principles of verifiability, irreversibility and transparency are needed to advance the nuclear disarmament process, and are indispensable to ensuring the effectiveness of nuclear disarmament measures.

Serious challenges will arise in nuclear disarmament verification efforts with the involvement of non-nuclear-weapon States due to obligations in Article 1 and Article 2 of the NPT. Nuclear disarmament verification should provide credible assurance while ensuring the protection of highly sensitive and confidential information.

Further studies are still needed on how non-nuclear-weapon States should participate in actual verification activities for the nuclear disarmament of nuclear-weapon States. However, it is imperative to engage both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States in efforts to construct a robust and credible international verification regime. Non-nuclear-weapon States’ technical and institutional contributions are crucial to attaining and maintaining a world free of nuclear
weapons.
(Development and strengthening of practical and effective nuclear disarmament verification measures)

1. Japan has maintained a realistic and practical approach in promoting nuclear disarmament, and underlines the importance of studying potential verification measures and activities, as well as of developing tools and technologies for verification in the nuclear disarmament process. This will facilitate medium- and long-term efforts to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

2. Japan, as a non-nuclear-weapon State, has amassed highly advanced knowledge and technologies related to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including robust safeguards technology, as well as expertise in on-site inspections of relevant arms control and disarmament instruments including the Chemical Weapons Convention. This knowledge can contribute to discussions on nuclear disarmament verification.

3. Based on the abovementioned expertise, Japan has actively contributed to discussions on verification technologies as well as operating procedures of on-site inspections in the International Partnership for Nuclear Disarmament Verification (IPNDV), in which both nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States work together to explore solutions to complex challenges involved in the verification of nuclear disarmament.

4. In order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, a robust and reliable international verification regime must be established with engagement by both nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States. In this context, the group of governmental experts on nuclear disarmament verification to be established under the General Assembly in 2018 can build on the work of the IPNDV.

5. Existing research efforts for the verification of nuclear disarmament include the Trilateral Initiative, a cooperative effort by the IAEA, the United States and the Russian Federation; the US-UK technical collaboration; and the UK-Norway Initiative (UKNI) on verification of warhead dismantlement. Discussions on nuclear verification can build on these previous initiatives as well as the IPNDV.

6. The following factors, among others, should be taken into account in studying and developing practical and effective measures on nuclear disarmament verification:
   a) Verification must be effective, and must provide sufficient confidence and transparency to
relevant parties to an agreement that other parties are complying with obligations;
b) Verification mechanism must prevent transfer of proliferation-sensitive information, 
including design information and manufacturing techniques related to nuclear weapons or 
other explosive devices;
c) Verification mechanism must ensure the safety of personnel, such as inspectors, carrying out 
verification activities. It must also ensure the security of items to be verified which may be 
targeted by criminal activity, such as nuclear materials and related facilities;
d) Verification mechanism must contribute to confidence-building;
e) Verification mechanism must be as effective as possible while still considering its efficiency.

(Importance of such measures in achieving and maintaining a world free of nuclear 
weapons)
7. The international community has demonstrated increasing interest in how nuclear-weapon 
States comply with and implement treaties or agreements relating to nuclear disarmament 
and arms control. Verifiability makes it possible to confirm whether parties implement and 
comply with their treaty obligations. The three principles of verifiability, irreversibility and 
transparency are needed to advance the nuclear disarmament process, and are indispensable 
to ensuring the effectiveness of nuclear disarmament measures. These principles have been 
mentioned in the relevant documents, including the Final Document of the 2010 NPT 
Review Conference.

8. Pursuant to Article VI of the NPT, all States parties, including non-nuclear-weapon States as 
well as nuclear-weapon States, are responsible for efforts towards a world free of nuclear 
weapons.

9. It is extremely difficult technically to conduct verification on nuclear disarmament even 
among nuclear-weapon States because this involves national security at the most 
confidential level. Serious challenges will arise in nuclear disarmament verification efforts 
with the involvement of non-nuclear-weapon States due to obligations in Article 1 and 
Article 2 of the NPT: under Article 1, nuclear-weapon States undertake not to transfer to any 
recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over 
such weapons of explosive devices directly, or indirectly and not in any way to assist, 
encourage, or induce any non-nuclear-weapon State to manufacture or otherwise acquire 
nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, or control over such weapons or 
explosive devices; under Article 2 of the NPT, non-nuclear-weapon States undertake not to
acquire or exercise control over nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices and not to seek or receive assistance in the manufacture of such devices. Nuclear disarmament verification should provide credible assurance while ensuring the protection of highly sensitive and confidential information.

10. As the number of nuclear weapons decreases, the strategic value of a single nuclear warhead will increase, as will the level of assurance required for verification on disarmament treaties. Verification and transparency will thus become increasingly important. In addition, in order to realize the goal of a world without nuclear weapons, it will be needed to establish a robust and reliable international verification system with a involvement of -nuclear-weapon States.

11. While further studies are still needed on the role to be played by non-nuclear-weapon States in actual verification activities for the nuclear disarmament of nuclear-weapon States, it is imperative to engage both nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States in efforts to construct a robust and credible international verification regime. Non-nuclear-weapon States’ technical and institutional contributions are crucial to attaining and maintaining a world free of nuclear weapons.

End