Thank you Mr. Chair,

The Japanese Delegation would also like to join the others who gathered here in celebrating this historic occasion of the entry into force of the Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court. On this memorable day, the Japanese Foreign Minister has issued a brief statement which I would like to share with those who are present.

It reads:
Statement by Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoriko Kawaguchi
Concerning the Entry into Force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court

1. The Government of Japan welcomes the entry into force of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC). This Statute will contribute to preventing the most serious crimes of concern to the international community from recurring in the future, thus further strengthening international peace and stability. The Rome Statute bears particular significance as it establishes, for the first time in history, a standing international court to judge such crimes.

2. Japan has consistently supported the establishment of the ICC. During the Rome Diplomatic Conference in 1998, Japan worked actively for the adoption of the ICC Statute. Japan has also been actively engaging in the effort to establish the ICC, including participating in ten sessions of the Preparatory Commission in New York. Japan has sent its delegations to all the deliberations to make a constructive contribution.

3. With regard to its conclusion of the ICC Statute, the Government of Japan is currently conducting a thorough examination of the articles of the Statute, legal measures taken by other states in accepting the instrument, so as to ensure the compatibility between the Statute and Japan’s own domestic law. Now that the ICC Statute has entered into force, Japan intends to accelerate such examination.

It goes without saying that what we all strive for is the peace and stability in international society where there exists no war, hunger and suffering of people. Despite all the aspiration among the people and the wisdom of leaders and intellectuals to realize such world, we have yet to achieve this goal. What is so deplorable is that we are still witnessing the recurrence of violence, grief and tears among our friends and neighbors around the world. This is the reality that called for the creation of the ICC.

All who have worked so hard since the Rome Conference to establish the ICC are fully aware that, in the ideal world, the ICC would not be asked to judge any case at all. However, since from the birth of the United Nations, we have seen so many lives lost, tears shed and hearts broken. We have also seen in a number of circumstances where justice cannot be done and the peace cannot be achieved by one country. It is in such circumstances the collective effort of international society were made so as to establish the mechanism of the standing international
court to judge the most atrocious crimes in this world.

Mr. Chair,

It is our dearest hope that through the basic principle of complementarity, there will be a rule of law spread out in the international community. The ICC will serve as the catalyst for each nation to fully implement its obligations under international law, and suppress any attempt, or even intention for anyone to dare to commit such grave violation of human rights. With its comprehensive coverage of the most serious crimes and thorough cooperation the Court can enjoy from the States Parties, the ICC will ensure that there will be no place on earth where perpetrators may escape. Thus, we can truly root out the cause that tolerates the culture of impunity. In order to achieve such objectives, it is imperative that the ICC wins the widest possible support among the members of the international community. In this regard, it is essential that in the remaining time before us, we all should endeavor to ensure that the Court operates on a solid standing.

In the previous session, some delegates referred to the state of the ICC as in its “embryonic” phase. Now that the Rome Statute has entered into force and the Court has come into its legal existence, let us offer our hands so that it can enter into its youth and subsequently become a trustworthy and independent adult. Through actively engaging in the discussion here at this session of the Preparatory Commission, Japan intends to continue its effort to achieve international justice in the world, and on this historic moment, our delegation would like to reiterate its firm commitment for this solemn undertaking.

Thank you for your attention.