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Remarks on the Opening Sessions of the Regional Workshop on
Transparency in Armaments
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Both the UN Standardized Instrument for Reporting Military Expenditures (1981) and the UN Register of Conventional Arms (1992) are relatively long-established transparency tools.

Even though the original goal of the Instrument for Military Expenditures to obtain actual reductions in military expenditure has faded, it still helps to build confidence. As regards the Register; it is widely believed that the Register has made good progress and the progress has virtually established arms transparency as an international norm.

Japan took the initiative in establishing the Register together with the then EC member states. Since its inception in 1991, an average of nearly 100 States have submitted reports each year. The year 2001 marked a record high 126 submissions and 1998 marked the lowest point, with 83 submissions. Reports for the calendar year 2007 unfortunately fell to 91.

These records show that participation level is not consistent and given the nature and the purpose of the Register, universality is the most important, but the hardest goal to achieve. Member States are facing various difficulties—administrative, technical, or political, or security concern or lack of capacity. Some countries may not find value in submitting a nil response yearly.

Regional workshops like this will provide a valuable opportunity for States to learn practical aspects of the Register and help increase understanding and knowledge on the mechanism and contribute to capacity building. This will in the long run help promote universality. The Japanese government attaches great significance to the UN Register and its universalization.

I will make a short presentation tomorrow about the outcomes of last year's Group of Governmental Experts meetings and prospects of the Register's further development. I hope it would provide some ideas about the challenges we are facing and I look forward to hearing your views on the Register's further development.