

Statement by Ms. Yaeko Sumi
Alternate Representative of Japan
On Item 28(1) - Advancement of Women
Item 28(b) - Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women and of
the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Third Committee
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Mr. Chairman,

The Government of Japan, under the administration of Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, is strengthening its efforts to address the issues of women. As Prime Minister Abe announced in his statement to the United Nations General Assembly on 26 September, Japan is actively committed to engage in international agenda concerning women and to make efforts to construct ‘a society where women shine.’ We are planning to implement official development aid (ODA) amounting to more than USD 3 billion over the next three years in the areas of women’s social advancement and capacity building; women’s health care; and women’s participation and protection in the field of peace and security.

Japan has been vigorously contributing to the activities of UN Women, as a vice-chair of the organization’s executive board. In addition to our core contributions to UN Women, this year Japan donated 1 million dollars to the UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women in response to violence against women in Libya. Japan will continue to respect activities of UN Women, and aspires to be one of its leading donors. We will also consolidate our relationship with UN Women as led by its new Executive Director, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to effectively realize a more peaceful society, it is important to secure women’s participation and incorporate women’s perspective into each and every phase of conflict prevention, conflict settlement, and peace building. From this perspective, Japan has been earnestly developing an action plan concerning Women, peace and security, based on UN Security Council resolution 1325. In this action plan, Japan shall include measures we must take, in collaboration with the civil society, for the sake of promoting women’s participation in such as efforts as conflict prevention, protection of female victims of sexual violence, and peace-building and restoration processes.

The Government of Japan believes that the issue of sexual violence in conflict must not be overlooked. We have implemented preventative measures against sexual violence, and assistance for victims of sexual violence in conflict in several countries including Libya, Somalia, Central Africa Republic to name a few. Japan appreciates that some 124 States have endorsed the declaration published at the recent events on sexual violence that were held during the UN General Assembly last month. By closely cooperating with UN Women, the ICC, and the Secretary General's Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict in this area, Japan is willing to work toward the prevention of sexual violence in conflict as well as on providing support to victims.

Mr. Chairman,

Throughout the recovery process of the Great East Japan Earthquake, which hit Japan in March 2011, Japan has placed great importance on the equal participation of both women and men. Based on this experience, we submitted a resolution on 'Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters' to the 56th session of the CSW, which was adopted. In order to continue discussing the various issues regarding women in natural disasters, Japan is planning to submit, once again, the 'Natural Disasters and Gender' resolution to the 58th session of the CSW in March next year.

Japan also recognizes the need to work toward the advancement of women within our own borders. Therefore, working in parallel with various international efforts, Japan has strengthened its domestic efforts toward the advancement of women. Recently, Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Fumio Kishida, declared Japan's participation in the United States' proposed 'Equal Futures Partnership,' of which we strongly approve, at the relevant meeting on 23 September. At this meeting, Japan set forth three commitments: (1) developing an environment in which both men and women can achieve compatibility between work and child rearing; (2) providing incentives to companies that promote efforts by women to play an active role and support their endeavors to achieve compatibility between work and child rearing; and (3) expanding women's participation in the political arena, based on a target of at least 30% of leadership positions in the policymaking process being occupied by women by 2020.

We recognize that allowing women to harness their capacity and succeed to the fullest of their potential is indispensable to creating a vibrant society and achieving sustained development. Based on such recognition, the 'Japan Revitalization Strategy' was endorsed by the Cabinet towards resolving the so-called 'issue of the M-shaped curve,' which includes promoting a social environment where women can flourish. Regarding employment, Japan has set out to increase the employment rate of women between the ages of 25 and 44 to 73% by the year 2020, or five points greater than it was in the year 2012.

Mr. Chairman

We aim to bring about a synergistic effect by pushing both international and domestic efforts forward. Japan will also continue to actively work towards the realization of gender equality and women's empowerment with the Member States, international organizations, and civil society.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.