

Statement by Ms. Hiroko Hashimoto
Representative of Japan
At the Fifty-seventh Session
of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women
7 March 2013

Madam Chairperson,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect to you, your fellow Bureau members and all those involved in your efforts to prepare this meeting.

Madam Chairperson,

In January of this year, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stated in his policy speech to the Diet that Japan aims at ‘a society in which working women can forge their own careers, and one in which both men and women find it easy to reconcile jobs and child-rearing.’ Based on our “Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality,” approved by the cabinet in December 2010, Japan is endeavoring to promote gender equality throughout various fields of society.

An example of this endeavor is the collaborative effort by both the government and various stakeholders to enhance understanding of ‘Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs),’ which are themselves the result of a collaboration between UN Women and the UN Global Compact, in order to strongly support the independent efforts of enterprises toward women’s economic empowerment.

Furthermore, under the Prime Minister’s initiative, and with close cooperation among the Ministers concerned, the government is considering measures to support women to take more active roles in order to revitalize the Japanese economy by hearing the voices of stakeholders directly at the Forum for Promoting Active Participation by Young People and Women.

Madam Chairperson,

This year's priority theme, the 'elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls,' should be tackled by the whole of international society; and Japan for its part places great emphasis on this issue. As was stated in the Foreign Policy Speech by Minister for Foreign Affairs, Fumio Kishida, to the Diet in February, Japan will continue to address the issue, and "actively participate in international initiatives on human rights issues, including the protection of women's rights."

Japan is making a wide range of efforts to tackle the many different forms that violence takes, and is also working to build a foundation to increase the social recognition of violence against women and girls and formulated applicable laws and regulations toward its elimination such as the "Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims" and the "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality."

Another of our measures is the "Campaign for Eliminating Violence against Women," which is conducted every year between November 12th and November 25th, and includes the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Last November, during her visit to Japan, H.E. Ms. Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN Women, attended the Tokyo Tower lighting-ceremony, in which the tower was lit with purple lights to raise awareness of the activities of the Campaign.

From the point of view of the equal partnership between men and women, and with a view toward building relationships without violence, Japan has further strengthened its efforts to guide young people more effectively, by producing and distributing educational materials toward the prevention of violence by dating partners, and conducting training programs for educators.

Japan is also working to construct a framework and institutions to protect female victims of violence, including greater and easier access to consultation regarding issues of violence stemming from problematic intimate emotions such as stalking by former intimate partners. Such institutions include providing more female police officers, who can give advice, ask appropriate questions and receive offence reports from female victims; and providing clear information to victims, including the use of flowcharts, to enable them to make informed choices by explaining the procedures and measures the police may take.

We launched new measures to address women's concerns and to tackle violence

against women in areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, which struck Japan on March 11, 2011. As one of our latest measures to address this issue, the Government of Japan is conducting a project in collaboration with local public authorities and NPOs to consult women about their concerns and violence in the disaster affected areas. This project has been opening numerous temporary counseling service desks, which provide consultation and counseling services both by phone and face-to-face. It also includes visitations to emergency temporary housing for face-to-face counseling by highly-trained professional counselors for the convenience of women affected by the disaster.

Madam Chairperson,

Japan has been contributing in the field of international cooperation based on the “Initiative on Gender and Development.” Japan has also been making efforts to promote global cooperation for the empowerment of women, including formulation of gender-responsive policies, development of institutions and mainstreaming the gender perspective into various sectors and phases of Official Development Assistance, including agriculture, forestry, water, health, and education.

From the point of view of the elimination and prevention of violence against women and children, for example, we have worked to strengthen networks around the Greater Mekong sub-regions by organizing regional seminars every year on the prevention of human trafficking targeting ASEAN countries, in addition to projects implemented in each country for the prevention of human trafficking and support for the victims of trafficking.

Japan has been promoting gender mainstreaming by providing assistance through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. For example, the Fund assisted the implementation of a project that aimed at preventing gender-based violence and improving human security by providing legal assistance to internally displaced persons including women.

Japan announced our will to “COMMIT,” by supporting the “Say No-UniTE to End Violence against Women” initiative. In addition, we have decided to provide assistance to the “UN Trust Fund to End Violence against Women,” which is managed by the UN Women.

Furthermore, Japan will actively work on gender issues, including efforts in the area of ‘Women, Peace and Security’ and will also positively consider developing a national action plan based on Security Council Resolution 1325.

Madam Chairperson,

The year 2013 marks the 20th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women in 1993. Japan is determined to continue to further promote domestic and international activities that contribute to the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls, to implement the Beijing Declaration and to realize the Millennium Development Goals, in close cooperation with international organizations and civil society, including NGOs.

Thank you.