

**Statement by Mr. Hirotaka Ishihara,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
58th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**

March 11, 2014, New York

Chairperson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the government of Japan, I would like to offer my sincere congratulations to His Excellency, Mr. Cabactulan and the bureau members on their appointments to their important posts for this significant meeting.

Chairperson,

The year 2015 will mark the 20th anniversary of the Beijing Conference and the 40th anniversary of the first World Conference on Women. With a view toward these important milestones, I believe that this year, 2014, should be a year when each country looks back on their efforts and considers ways to share the contributions achieved by such efforts with the international community.

For Japan's part, the administration of our Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, is working on creating a "society in which women shine," as one of its key growth strategies.

Japan would like to contribute to creating such societies all around the world. As Prime Minister Abe stated in his speech during the general debate at the UN General Assembly last September, Japan will strengthen its assistance to developing countries, in order to contribute to promoting the participation and the empowerment of women in society, through ODA programs exceeding 3 billion USD over three years starting from 2013.

Chairperson,

The milestone year of 2015 also coincides with the deadline of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Already discussions have begun on the the Post-2015 Development Agenda to succeed the MDGs. It is necessary for the Post-2015 Development Agenda to bring about equitable and comprehensive growth that enables all people to share in the fruits of development from the perspective of Human Security. In this regard, Japan attaches great importance to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The promotion of universal health coverage (UHC) is also crucially important in this regard. We should shift our way of thinking from a disease-based mindset to a person-based mindset in promoting UHC, and thereby ensure equitability and respond to the world's diversifying health needs. Japan will use all of its knowledge to contribute to solving the world's health issues.

Chairperson,

It was on this very day, three years ago that the Great East Japan Earthquake struck my country and 18,000 precious lives were lost. Japan learned many lessons from that disaster. One of which was that women often faced great difficulties while living in shelters, such as a lack of places to breastfeed or change clothes. The reasons behind these were the fact that there had been inadequate participation by women at every stage of decision-making in disaster prevention, disaster relief, and post-disaster restoration and reconstruction. As it turned out, it was insufficient to consider the difference in needs between men and women after the fact. Japan learned that it is important for stakeholders concerned to engage gender-responsive disaster prevention, disaster relief, and post-disaster restoration and reconstruction and promote gender equality and the full participation of women in decision-making and leadership even in ordinary times.

We cannot prevent natural disasters from taking place, but we can reduce the damage they cause and the number of lives they take. In a bid to appeal for the importance of creating a more disaster-resistant society, taking into consideration gender issues, and to share our disaster prevention technologies and systems with the world, Japan will host the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai City, one of the disaster affected areas, in March 2015. In addition, in order to help the international community share gender perspectives and an understanding of the importance of women's roles in disaster prevention and post-disaster reconstruction, Japan would like to once again table a resolution entitled "Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters," during this 58th session of the CSW.

Thank you for your attention.