

**Statement by Mr. Yoji Muto,
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
60th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**

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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 dedicated efforts to prepare for this meeting.

Madam Chairperson,

2016 is a critical year as we begin the steady implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which was adopted in September of last year. We welcome that “gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls” is included as one of the 17 goals of the 2030 Agenda, and that the high-level representatives of international society share a common recognition that achieving gender equality is an important challenge and necessary measure to achieve our sustainable development goals.

The Government of Japan has made the realization of “a society where all women shine” one of the priority issues of its Cabinet, based on the idea that the empowerment of women is essential to achieving sustainable growth and maintaining the social vitality of Japan. Japan is now tackling various issues that hinder women’s success, aiming for a society where women in various situations can realize their hopes and goals including in the home, in their local communities and in the work place.

In this connection, in December 2015 the Cabinet drafted the “Fourth Basic Plan for Gender Equality” which enumerates the Government’s gender equality-related measures over the next five years. This April, the “Act of Promotion of Women’s Participation and Advancement in the Workplace” will enter fully into force, and it mandates both the national and local

governments as well as large corporations to identify and analyze their gender-equality situations, formulate action plans with numerical targets, and publicly disclose information regarding the recruitment and promotion of women. Across the board, Japan's measures toward gender equality and empowerment of women are being raised to a higher level.

Japan would also like to spread the idea of realizing a society where women shine to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, we recognize many issues which impede even the most conservative efforts to safeguard a minimum standard of life and safety, including poverty, conflict, violence, discrimination and natural disasters. Against such challenges, people in vulnerable situations are particularly at risk. Moreover in recent years, many women and girls have been suffering from new hardships such as violent extremism and displacement by regional conflicts; we urgently need to address these challenges.

We put particular emphasis on the power of women themselves to contribute toward solving such global issues. It is necessary that women, who comprise half of the world's population, be given the opportunities to exercise their abilities to the fullest extent in order to break the deadlock of current conditions.

Madame Chairperson,

The Government of Japan clarified its emphasis on the greater role of women in development by including "Promoting women's participation" as one of the guiding principles in the implementation of our ODA in the Government's Development Cooperation Charter, which was adopted by the Cabinet last year.

It is important to secure high quality education for women and girls so that they can become financially independent and freely determine how they want to live their own lives. Japan has pledged to contribute more than 42 billion yen in ODA over three years from 2015 directed toward this aim. Moreover, Japan seeks to strengthen its close partnerships with other countries and international organizations including UN-Women and the Office of the Special

Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. For example, last month Japan decided to contribute about 22 million dollars for 14 of UN-Women's current projects targeting women who are suffering from conflicts and violent extremism.

Japan's initiatives toward greater gender equality are also embodied in the World Assembly for Women: WAW!, a regular symposium in Tokyo which we began hosting in 2014. Over the two days of the second WAW! symposium held last year, 145 leaders in the field of women's from Japan and around the world issues participated, and some 2000 audience members attended.

At this symposium we held many comprehensive discussions at high-level round tables on the economy and international cooperation under such themes as 'work-life management', 'girls and education' and 'women and peacebuilding'. Moreover we had various discussions in special sessions such as the 'youth table' and 'Women in the field of Natural Science' as well. The outcome of the symposium was summed up in the document "WAW! To Do 2015" which was submitted as a UN document.

Madame Chairperson,

International society set many ambitious targets in the 2030 Agenda. However, setting a target as such has no meaning unless we also make concrete progress toward achieving it. We need to get off to a good start and deliver steady results so that we will not have to have the same discussion 14 years from now. Japan will positively commit to its responsibilities as a member of the international community.

We will continuously make efforts toward the realization of the empowerment of women and gender equality in cooperation with international society, international organizations and civil society.

Thank you very much.