

**Video message by State Foreign Minister UTO at the virtual Ministerial Roundtable held jointly by UN Women and the Government of Denmark**

December 7, 2020

Her Excellency, Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN-Women,

His Excellency, Mr. Rasmus Prehn, Minister for Development Cooperation of Denmark,  
Distinguished guests,

Good morning and good afternoon. I am UTO Takashi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

It is my honor to convey a message on behalf of the Government of Japan to this Roundtable jointly organized by UN Women and the Government of Denmark.

COVID-19 has heavily impacted women and girls. Due to the pandemic, domestic and sexual violence has become ever more serious, sectors which employ high percentages of women have been disproportionately affected, and school shutdowns and lockdowns are forcing women to shoulder even more of the care burden such as childcare and elderly care. We, the international community, share in these problems and must find a solution.

Humankind can turn this crisis to an opportunity for improvement. UN Secretary-General António Guterres asked us to "put women and girls at the center of efforts to recover from COVID-19." We have an opportunity to further advance gender equality through our efforts to overcome the challenges we face today.

The Government of Japan has been working in cooperation with UN Women to support women marginalized by the COVID-19 crisis in developing countries based on a concept of human security in which all life and dignity should be respected. In Kenya, for example, Japan has distributed approximately 60,000 masks and reached 10,000 people through awareness raising on gender-based violence and COVID-19 prevention. Another Japanese programme in South Africa is providing women with training and advisory resources to promote entrepreneurship.

It is our goal that these support programmes simultaneously help women in

developing countries protect themselves from infectious diseases while also improving their livelihoods, thus contributing to the promotion of gender equality and women's economic empowerment around the world.

The Government of Japan and UN Women have been exchanging views at various levels, both in New York and in Tokyo, in order to implement better projects. At a policy dialogue with UN Women last week, we confirmed our intent to continue our close collaboration and cooperation. Together with UN Women, we can build a society where “no one is left behind.”

Thank you very much for your attention.