

Details of Exchanges Between Japan  
and the Republic of Korea (ROK)  
Regarding the Comfort Women Issue  
~ From the Drafting of the Kono Statement to  
the Asian Women's Fund ~

June 20, 2014

Study Team on the Details Leading to the Drafting of the Kono Statement etc.  
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## **The Study Team on the Drafting Process of the Kono Statement etc.**

### **-- Study Conducted at the Study Meetings --**

#### **1. Background to the Study**

- (1) At the House of Representatives Budget Committee hearing held on February 20, 2014, former Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobuo Ishihara testified with regards to the Kono Statement that (i) no post factum corroborating investigation was conducted on the result of the hearings of former comfort women that is said to have served as the basis of the Kono Statement; (ii) there is a possibility that in the drafting process of the Kono Statement, the language was compared and coordinated with the Republic of Korea (ROK) side; and (iii) as a result of announcing the Kono Statement, problems of the past between Japan and the ROK were once settled, but have recently been brought up again by the ROK government, and it is extremely regrettable that the good intentions of the Government of Japan at that time are not being recognized.
- (2) Following the testimony, in response to a question in the Diet, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga answered that the process leading to the drafting of the Kono Statement and understanding what actually occurred at that time should be clarified in an appropriate manner.
- (3) Based on this background, the team undertook a study regarding the sequence of processes, centering on the exchanges with the ROK during the process leading to the drafting of the Kono Statement and extending to the Asian Women's Fund, which was a follow-up measure subsequent to the Statement. Accordingly, the Study Team did not undertake inquiries and studies aimed at grasping the historical facts of the comfort women issue itself.

#### **2. Schedule of Meetings Held**

Friday, April 25, 2014	Preparatory meeting
Wednesday, May 14	First meeting
Friday, May 30	Second meeting
Friday, June 6	Third meeting
Tuesday, June 10	Fourth meeting

### 3. The Study Team's Members

In order to ensure complete confidentiality, the members of the Study Team perused relevant documents after they were sworn in as part-time government officials.

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### 4. Period Covered by the Study

The study covered the period from the early half of the 1990s, when the comfort women issue emerged as an outstanding issue between Japan and the ROK, up to the completion of the Asian Women's Fund's projects in the ROK.

### 5. Study Method

- (1) The study covered a series of documents concerning the comfort women issue held by the Office of the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary, which took over the duties of the Cabinet Councilors' Office on External Affairs. At that time, the Cabinet Councilors' Office on External Affairs was carrying out the government inquiry that led up to the Kono Statement and the administrative duties leading to the announcement of the Kono Statement together with a series of documents on the comfort women issue that mainly includes exchanges between Japan and the ROK and a series of documents on the Asian Women's Fund as a follow-up measure, which are held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- (2) On the condition of complete confidentiality, testimonies from hearings of the former comfort women, former military personnel and other relevant parties were also made available to members of the Study Team for their perusal. Additionally, during the process of the study, in order to supplement the documents-based study, the Cabinet Secretariat carried out hearings of government personnel who were in charge of the hearings of the former comfort women at that time.
- (3) In undertaking the study, based on the abovementioned documents, testimonies and outcomes of hearings that the Cabinet Secretariat and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs made available to the Study Team for studying, the Team grasped the facts and objectively confirmed the series of processes.

## 6. Study Results by the Study Team

Under the instruction of the Study Team, based on relevant documents designated for their study, the administrative authorities of the government compiled a report of facts as attached. The Study Team concluded that the content of the report was valid, insofar as the documents that were made available during the study process.

June 20, 2014

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June 20, 2014

**I. Details of the Drafting of the Kono Statement**

**1. Exchanges Between Japan and the ROK up to Prime Minister Miyazawa's Visit to the ROK (up to January 1992)**

(1) After the first former comfort woman came forward in the ROK on August 14, 1991, three former comfort women from the ROK filed a lawsuit in the Tokyo District Court on December 6 of the same year. Japanese Prime Minister Miyazawa was scheduled to visit the ROK in January 1992, but amid growing interest in the comfort women issue and mounting anti-Japanese criticism in the ROK, diplomatic authorities in Japan and the ROK became concerned that the issue would surface as an outstanding issue during the Prime Minister's visit to the ROK. On a number of occasions from December 1991, the ROK side conveyed its view that it would be desirable for the Japanese side to take some kind of action in advance so that the comfort women issue would not surface as an outstanding issue when Prime Minister Miyazawa visits the ROK. At the same time, the ROK sought a response to the issue prior to the Prime Minister's visit and requested that Japan take steps to ensure the issue did not create friction between the two countries, such as by having the Japanese side address the idea of expressing some kind of position perhaps in the form of a Cabinet Secretary statement, and demonstrating a stance of remorse, prior to the Prime Minister's ROK visit. As of December 1991, the Japanese side was already confidentially considering within their government that, "It would be appropriate if the Prime Minister could effectively accept the involvement of the Japanese military, and make an expression of remorse and regret," but also that, "There is a possibility that public opinion in the ROK will not be appeased simply with a verbal apology alone." One option that was being cited was to make a symbolic gesture in the form of erecting a memorial for the comfort women.

(2) In December 1991, under the coordination of the Cabinet Councilors' Office on External Affairs, the Japanese side launched a study involving all potentially relevant ministries and agencies. On January 7, 1992, it was reported that documents had been discovered at the National Institute for Defense Studies indicating the involvement of the military. Subsequently, as a result of a January 11, 1992 report on these documents by the Asahi Shimbun, anti-Japanese criticism inside the ROK heated up. At a regular press conference on January 13, 1992, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato stated that, "At the present point in time, we are not at the stage of stating what degree of involvement took place and what form it took, but involvement by the military cannot be denied," and that "I would like to offer my heartfelt feelings of apology and remorse to those who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences as so-called wartime comfort women."

(3) At a Summit Meeting held during Prime Minister Miyazawa's visit to the ROK from January 16 to 18 1992, President Roh Tae-woo stated that he "appreciates the acknowledgement of the former Japanese military's involvement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato and his expression of apology and remorse. Going forward, I expect that Japan will take the necessary measures and strive to clarify the facts." Prime Minister Miyazawa stated that, "It has reached the point where I know of the undeniable fact that the former Japanese military had been involved in recruiting wartime comfort women, managing comfort stations and so forth. The Government of Japan has decided to acknowledge this publicly and make a heartfelt apology." Prime Minister Miyazawa added that he wanted to "express my heartfelt feelings of apology and remorse to those who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences as wartime comfort women," and that "an inquiry has been taking place at the relevant government ministries and agencies from the end of last year, and from here forward we also intend to continue to search for documents and clarify the facts wholeheartedly."

## 2. Exchanges between Japan and the ROK during the Period between Prime Minister Miyazawa's Visit to the ROK up to the Announcement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato (the Announcement of the Findings of the Inquiry) (From January 1992 to July 1992)

(1) Following Prime Minister Miyazawa's visit to the ROK, in January 1992 the ROK government announced a "government policy concerning the volunteer corps issue," in which it said it would "pursue thorough clarification of the facts and appropriate compensatory and other measures accompanying that, from the Government of Japan." On the Japanese side, in addition to an inquiry aimed at clarifying the facts, it

considered “holding discussions in order to exchange ideas with the ROK side regarding measures that the Government of Japan can take independently, from a humanitarian perspective, in regards to the so-called wartime comfort women issue, separate to the framework of the legal resolution of 1965,” and ideas were sought confidentially from the ROK side.

(2) The inquiry into relevant documents at various ministries and agencies that the Japanese side launched in December 1991 continued until June 1992. Prior to the announcement of the results of that inquiry, the ROK side asked that the inquiry be of a level that is convincing to the government and citizens of the ROK, and proposed holding unofficial, advance discussions at the working level regarding the announcement of the inquiry findings.

Additionally, just prior to the announcement, various exchanges took place with the ROK side regarding the manner in which the inquiry results would be announced. This included a suggestion from the ROK side that in addition to the announcement of the inquiry results themselves, it should include an expression of the Government of Japan’s views on the inquiry results as well as proposed post-inquiry measures.

Regarding the content of the inquiry results, the ROK side praised the Government of Japan’s efforts in carrying out the inquiry in good faith, while pointing out that overall there was a major gap between the results and the expectations of the ROK side and that there was a possibility that this would aggravate sentiment and public opinion among the citizens of the ROK. Furthermore, the ROK requested that the facts continue to be clarified, including the issue of whether or not there was “coerciveness” involved at the time of recruitment, and that, “follow-up measures” (compensation and inclusion in textbooks) be taken, and stated that, “the course of public opinion on the ROK side was of concern given that the inquiry findings did not include any indication of clear evidence of forced mobilization which had been found in the testimonies etc. of the relevant individuals at the time.” Incidentally, ahead of the announcement of the inquiry findings by the Government of Japan, in July 1992, the ROK government announced the progress of its own inquiry into and study about the comfort women issue among others, but also on that occasion, it sought comment from the Japanese side in advance. As a result, prior adjustments were made by the two countries.

(3) On July 6, 1992, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato announced at a press conference the findings of the inquiry up to that point. The Chief Cabinet Secretary acknowledged that based on the inquiry that was carried out on documents at the ministries and agencies

that might hold such relevant materials, “the Government had been involved in the establishment of comfort stations, the control of those who recruited comfort women, the construction and reinforcement of comfort facilities, the management and surveillance of comfort stations, the hygiene maintenance in comfort stations and among comfort women, and the issuance of identification as well as other documents to those who were related to comfort stations.” He stated that “the Government again would like to express its sincere apology and remorse to all those who have suffered indescribable hardship as so-called ‘wartime comfort women,’ and that “by listening to the opinions of people from various directions, I would like to consider sincerely in what way we can express our feelings to those who suffered such hardship.” At the same time, in response to questions regarding the issue of whether any documents substantiating to forced or deceitful recruitment were discovered during the inquiry, he responded that such documents “have thus far not been discovered.”

(4) Incidentally, it is evident that various deliberations took place within the ROK, on “compensation” and in connection with the Agreement on the Settlement of Problems Concerning Property and Claims and on Economic Cooperation Between Japan and the ROK. Issues pondered included whether a review would be needed to determine if the ROK’s claim had already been settled legally, or at that point in time, it should not make a new request to the Japanese side for compensation.

### 3. Exchanges Between Japan and the ROK During the Period Between Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato’s Announcement and Prior to the Statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono (July 1992 to August 1993)

(1) Even following Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato’s announcement, harsh views regarding the comfort women issue did not disappear from public opinion in the ROK. Under such circumstances, the Cabinet Councilors’ Office on External Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued an examination of future measures regarding the comfort women issue. In a discussion that took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in early October 1992, the need to resolve the issue during the term of the Roh Tae-woo Administration (the ROK held a presidential election in December 1992) was acknowledged. Also in early October, under Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara, officials from the Cabinet Councilors’ Office on External Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs discussed future plans concerning the comfort women issue. In those discussions it was confirmed that the items to be considered in the future in relation to the comfort women issue were: (i) future initiatives concerning the clarification of facts;

(ii) measures of some sort towards the ROK; (iii) measures for countries and regions other than the ROK; (iv) an approach to the Japanese Red Cross Society (hereafter referred to as “the JRC”) (namely, a request for cooperation in order to implement (ii)); and (v) the establishment of a bipartisan council of Diet members. Of these items, on the clarification of the facts, it was decided that although the scope of the document-based inquiry would be expanded, conducting interviews with former comfort women would be difficult. Additionally, on measures towards the ROK, it was envisaged that a fund would be set up within the JRC, and with the cooperation of the Korean Red Cross (hereafter referred to as “the KRC”) it would implement welfare measures mainly covering former comfort women.

(2) Based on the abovementioned plans, at a mid-October 1992 exchange between working-level officials from Japan and the ROK, the Japanese side communicated -- as an unofficial position -- the idea of a package of two items comprising (i) establishing a fund at the JRC that would implement measures expressing Japan’s feelings over the comfort women issue to the ROK and other countries; and (ii) implementing measures such as expanding the scope of the agencies and ministries covered in the clarification of the facts and gathering documents held by central and regional libraries. The ROK side’s response to this package was that (i) what is important is clarifying the facts; (ii) from the ROK citizens’ standpoint, an explanation that, it is not known whether or not force was involved because documents have not been found, makes it appear that the matter is being dismissed as a formality and that no genuine effort is being made; and (iii) it is important for victims and perpetrators to be interviewed and for the Government of Japan to admit that comfort women arose out of force.

(3) As a result of these reactions from the ROK side, the Japanese side again explored its response plans. In late October, based on the basic standpoint that in order to build a future-oriented Japan-ROK relationship, efforts should be made to try to settle this issue before the change in the ROK’s administration, a plan was decided upon and was communicated to the ROK. This involved proposing to the ROK side that a resolution to the issue be pursued using a package comprising (i) clarification of the facts by adopting additional measures such as expanding the scope of the document-based inquiry, holding interviews with (several) representatives of former comfort women, and arriving at a conclusion. Although reaching a definite recognition would be difficult with regards to the issue of the involvement of “coerciveness,” demonstrating a degree of recognition by stating that “it cannot be denied that some elements of coerciveness

also existed”); and (ii) “measures to express our feelings” (envisaged as an establishment of a fund within the JRC that would implement mainly welfare measures while cooperating with the KRC).

(4) However, because of the presidential election in December 1992, discussions with the ROK side were not progressing, and the ROK’s response was that it wanted to discuss the matter in earnest after the presidential election. As a result, the Japanese side decided on a plan to coordinate with staff in the new ROK administration and try to settle the issue fully and promptly. In doing so, it was decided that responses going forward would include: (i) implementing measures in order to clarify the facts; (ii) making details of the follow-up measures as concrete as possible; and (iii) sounding out to the ROK side once again about presenting a degree of recognition, “in combination with follow-up measures and as an outcome of measures to clarify the facts” that “conceivably there were also some elements of ‘coerciveness.’” In that regard, measures for clarifying the facts that were cited included: (i) expanding the scope of the inquiry; (ii) obtaining the findings of the ROK’s inquiry; (iii) seeking the opinions of people concerned and experts on the Japanese side; and (iv) seeking the opinions of representatives of former comfort women. However, it was decided that seeking the opinions of representatives of former comfort women would be carried out “at the final stages, once there is a prospect of obtaining the ROK side’s cooperation on the conclusion of the clarification of facts and the follow-up measures” and that this effort “be kept to a minimum.”

(5) In December 1992, before and after the ROK presidential election, the Japanese side successively explained its basic standpoint to the ROK side.

On the clarification of facts, the Japanese side explained that (i) the Government of Japan had thus far been striving to clarify the facts, but reaching a 100% level of clarification is always impossible in the first place; (ii) the recruitment of comfort women probably involved “coerciveness” in some cases and not in others, but it would probably not be possible to determine that ratio; and (iii) at the final stages, Japanese government officials are thinking of possibly expressing in some manner that there were elements of “coerciveness” as an acknowledgement by the Government of Japan after meeting with and listening to representatives of comfort women, and also referring to the findings of the ROK government’s inquiry. In response, the ROK side stated that (i) even if (the comfort women) theoretically went of their own free will, it is conceivable that the circumstances once they arrived were different to what they had been told; and

(ii) it is important to recognize that these women did not become comfort women voluntarily.

With regard to follow-up measures, the Japanese side explained that while legally such matters were settled, it did recognize that given the nature of the issue it was not simply a case of illegal activities and that it was a moral issue of how to display good faith. Japan explained that in implementing follow-up measures, it would listen carefully to the ROK side's opinions as a reference, but that basically the measures would be implemented by Japan voluntarily.

(6) In February 1993, President Kim Young-sam was appointed. Around February and March 1993, in considerations relating to the Japanese side's policies, the basic perspective adopted by Japan was that "the issue could be resolved in a package deal in which the ROK government will accept the implementation of measures of some sort in return for the Government of Japan's conclusions regarding the clarification of the facts," and "where the clarification of facts is concerned, the possibility of demonstrating our recognition through an expression of some sort that recruiting also took place in a way that partially involved the elements of "coerciveness" is being considered," and that "with regard to measures that can be taken, consideration has been given to setting up a fund and implementing welfare measures via a counterpart of a relevant country (or region)." Regarding the issue of "coerciveness," the plan that was presented called for "an approach to be made to the ROK government, that the Government of Japan is prepared to acknowledge, for example, that it is not possible to deny some involvement by the military and government authorities and that there were cases in which women became wartime comfort women 'in a manner that was against their own will'." Additionally, with regard to interviewing representatives of former comfort women, the plan mentioned that "Consideration will be given to implementing this as a ceremony, so to speak, and in the minimum necessary format at the final stages when there is a prospect of obtaining the ROK side's cooperation on the conclusion of the clarification of facts and the follow-up measures, while taking into account relations with other countries and regions" (details of the hearings are discussed below).

(7) Commenting on the comfort women issue on March 13, 1993, ROK President Kim Young-sam, who had been appointed in February, stated that "We do not plan to demand material compensation from the Government of Japan. Compensation will be undertaken using the budget of the ROK government from next year. Doing so will undoubtedly make it possible to pursue a new Japan-ROK relationship by claiming the

moral high-ground.”

During working-level discussions between Japan and the ROK that took place in mid-March 1993, the Japanese side entered discussions with a working plan that centered on (i) resolving the comfort women issue promptly; (ii) requesting the ROK government to implement measures towards public opinion; and (iii) in light of the aforementioned statement by President Kim Young-sam, confirming the ROK government’s plans and the ROK’s position regarding measures to be undertaken by Japan. Within this working plan, the Japanese side decided to “concretely sound out the fact that the Government of Japan is prepared to demonstrate a degree of recognition with regard to the involvement of “coerciveness” issue, as an area of common ground in clarifying the facts. Additionally, (the Japanese government) will sound out the fact that it is prepared to hold an interview with a representative (or representatives) of former comfort women if it is able to obtain the intermediation of the ROK government, as one part of the package of measures relating to this issue.” In the course of the working-level discussions, the ROK side stated that on the question of how the Japanese side makes its recognition, it believed that while it would not be possible to make an announcement that contradicted the facts for Japan, it should avoid employing a complicated “preface” (such as stating, for example, that “it was not possible to find documents showing the direct involvement of the military in the recruitment” before recognizing the involvement of “coerciveness” in some form).

At the Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting on April 1, 1993, Foreign Minister Watanabe conveyed to Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo that on the issue of “coerciveness,” “stating that there was involvement of force in all cases would be difficult,” that “working-level staff are being instructed to explore expressions that demonstrate the Government of Japan’s recognition to the greatest extent possible but in a way that does not bring lingering uneasiness to the hearts of citizens of either country” and that “we hope to consult the ROK side regarding how to present our recognition.”

(8) At the same time, up to then the ROK side had adopted the position that it should not raise point-by-point questions about how to clarify the facts, and that the bottom line was that it wanted Japan to move the process ahead in good faith. However, from around the time of the Foreign Minsters’ Meeting held on April 1, 1993, the ROK side began adopting a stance that it expected the Japanese side to move ahead with clarifying the facts in a way that would be convincing to comfort women-related groups within the ROK, and that the ROK government itself would not be able to exert pressure domestically in order to try to control the situation. Similarly, at a working-level

exchange of views between Japan and the ROK that took place in early April 1993, the ROK stated that, in response to the approach by the Japanese side, (i) the Japanese side needs to be visibly seen to have exhausted every effort to clarify the facts and there should be no unnecessary rush to resolve the issue hurriedly; (ii) it is unlikely to be acceptable to state that only some comfort women were forced; and (iii) it will not be possible for the ROK government to direct or otherwise shut out public opinion in the ROK to try to settle the issue with the Japanese side, and everything will come down to how the Government of Japan's stance is received by the citizens of the ROK.

Additionally, in exchanges between working-level staff in Japan and the ROK that took place in late April 1993, the ROK side stated that if the announcement by the Japanese side relied on measured expressions such as "there was involvement of coerciveness in some cases" it would likely trigger a furor. In response, the Japanese side replied that on the issue of "coerciveness", based also on the findings of the inquiry conducted domestically up to then, it would not be possible to arrive at a conclusion that would distort historical facts. Additionally, following the report on the outcome of this discussion, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ishihara stated that it would not be possible to say unconditionally that all comfort women were recruited with "coerciveness."

(9) When Foreign Minister Muto visited the ROK on June 29 and 30, 1993, the Foreign Minister said it would "announce our findings based on an objective judgment and demonstrate our recognition of this issue" and that "with regard to what sort of expressions will be used specifically, the Japanese side also intends to make the utmost effort to obtain the understanding of the citizens of the ROK, but in doing so, hopes to secure the understanding and cooperation of the ROK government from a broader perspective." Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo expressed gratitude for the abundantly sincere statement from the Japanese side, while stating that "the number one priority is to recognize force, number two is an utmost effort to clarify the overall picture, number three is an expression of commitment to continuing with the inquiry from here on as well, and number four is an expression of intention to learn the lessons of history. If these points are met then"..."the ROK government also"..."intends to strive to amicably resolve this issue." The ROK side also explained that it did not intend to seek monetary compensation from Japan.

#### 4. Details of the Hearings of the Former Comfort Women

(1) Concerning the hearings of the former comfort women, the ROK side indicated continuously over the period from July to December 1992 the following (i) that there

should be hearings of the victims and the perpetrators; (ii) that the Japanese side, while it might not be able to listen to all of the comfort women, ought to listen to some of them to demonstrate its sincerity; (iii) the importance that the Government of Japan to communicate to the ROK people that it was doing its absolute best to address this issue; (iv) that not only the Government of Japan, but also local governments and foreign countries should conduct investigations and listen to the testimonies of relevant parties. Moreover, the ROK side indicated its view that hearings would be able to soften the feelings of the related parties and would also show Japan's sincerity to those who were insisting that it was not of their own will.

(2) Initially the view within the Japanese side was that once the hearing with the former comfort women began that it would not have control and that it needed to be cautiously considered. But by December 1992, based on the above-stated views of the ROK and that, "in the final stage, in which there is the prospect of receiving cooperation from the ROK on concluding the clarification of facts and follow-up measures," it decided on a policy of carrying out a hearing of the former comfort women "in the minimum necessary format." Subsequently, in communication between Japan and ROK officials in March 1993, the Japanese side sounded out the ROK side that, in accordance with its measures to respond to three of the aforementioned policies (see 3 (4) to (6)), if the Government of the ROK will be able to mediate, then as part of a package of measures for this issue, it was ready to hold interviews with a representative (or representatives) of the former comfort women. In response to this, the ROK side commented that it was a noteworthy idea and also stated that it might not be necessary to hear from all of the relevant parties, that it would be possible to request the attendance of "witnesses," and that the Government of the ROK would probably prefer not to witness it.

(3) From around April 1993, communications on the hearings with the former comfort women took place in earnest. At this time, the Government of the ROK began sounding out groups related to the comfort women issue, but it explained that the claims of the groups related to the comfort women issue were harsh against Japan, and that there were negative reactions that speeding up for a solution were perceived as taking the testimony of the comfort women but with the intention of avoiding the main issue. Also, the Government of the ROK stated that it was necessary to explain the status of the hearings, that the interviews with the persons in question were a method of last resort after every other method of clarifying the facts had been tried, and rather than taking a

sudden, unilateral decision to hold interviews, that it was necessary to take enough time in dealing with this. On top of this, the Government of the ROK discussed the issue with the Association of Pacific War Victims and Bereaved Families (hereinafter referred to as “the Association of the Bereaved.” Formed in 1973, the objective of the activities of this incorporated body, which was mainly formed by members of the bereaved families of the Pacific War, is to investigate the actual conditions of the bereaved families, to hold mutual exchanges among others) and also the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan (hereinafter referred to as “the Korean Council.”). Formed in 1990, it is comprised of several Christian women’s groups, and its policies as a movement are particularly to deal with the comfort women issue, to certify the crimes of the Japanese army, and to demand legal compensation among others from the Japanese side). The Government of the ROK indicated that its view was that the Association of the Bereaved would agree to holding the hearings, but that the Korean Council had expressed its disapproval for any hearings, hence one proposal was to refer to the testimonies collected by the Korean Council. In the middle of May 1993, the Government of the ROK indicated that it did not think any new facts would emerge from the hearings, but it would respond to it if it were to be held as part of a process to resolve this issue. Also, in the communication between Japan and ROK officials that took place at the beginning of July, the ROK side indicated its views that conducting the hearings ultimately was up to the Japanese side and while it did not consider it to be indispensable, hearings would be one process that would strongly demonstrate the sincerity of the Japanese side, and that if it could be realized, it considered that it could be one effective process in order to receive a positive reaction from the relevant parties in the ROK when the results of the inquiries were announced.

(4) From the end of May to June 1993, the Japanese side successively made contact and held discussions with the Korean Council and the Association of the Bereaved toward holding hearings with the former comfort women.

As was previously stated in (3), the Korean Council had a harsh stance due to the distrust of the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK suggested that in order to mitigate this, carrying out local investigation or having the attendance of civilians at the interviews were required. Based on the Government of the ROK’s suggestions, in late May, the Japanese Embassy in the ROK began discussions with the Korean Council, but for it to agree to the hearings, it attached conditions that the findings of the additional inquiry conducted by the Government of Japan at that time should be presented in advance and that the “force” be recognized, and despite

communications with the Japanese side, it did not alter this stance. The Korean Council commented that if Japanese officials, and moreover male officials, suddenly arrived in the ROK, no one would open their hearts and talk, and it should be sufficient to refer to the collection of testimonies collected by the Korean Council for the testimony of the comfort women. Ultimately, hearings with the Korean Council were abandoned and instead, its collection of testimonies was referred to.

(5) On the other hand, the Japanese Embassy in the ROK began discussions with the Association of the Bereaved and over the course of negotiations with it that took place on several occasions, the Association agreed to the holding of hearings. For this, both agreed (i) that the hearings be held in a quiet environment and that the location be the office of the Association of the Bereaved; (ii) that when the hearings are held, one lawyer from the National Federation of Consultative Assemblies of Civil Liberties and one lawyer involved in the lawsuit would attend as observers from the Japanese side, while one relevant party from the Association of the Bereaved would attend as an observer from its side; (iii) that the hearings would take place with all the comfort women who wished to attend, recruited by the Association of the Bereaved; (iv) that no outside journalists enter the hearings and in addition, while video would be taken for use as internal record for the Association of the Bereaved, this video would not be released nor used in court of law; (v) that the Government of Japan as a defendant in the lawsuit regarding the comfort women, would not use the testimonies of the nine former comfort women who are appearing on the plaintiff side as reference in itself,, but agreed that these testimonies collected in a different format by the Association of the Bereaved could be used as reference materials. The time for prior coordination for the hearings was limited and also there was an attitude that for the Japanese side, the stories of the former comfort women would be difficult to listen to. Hence, as was previously stated, the hearings were held at a venue arranged by the Association of the Bereaved (the office of the Association), and the Japanese side would not be involved in the selection of the former comfort women who would attend the hearing. Furthermore, during the coordination of specific details between the Japanese side and the Association of the Bereaved for the holding of the hearings, facts that showed that the Government of the ROK participated or coordinated in some way in the selection of the former comfort women who would attend the hearing could not be confirmed.

(6) Finally, the hearings at the office of the Association of the Bereaved began on July 26, 1993. It was initially scheduled for two days until the following day on July 27, but

ultimately it was held until July 30 and hearings of a total of 16 people were held. On the Japanese side, five people attended the hearings from the Cabinet Councilors' Office on External Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stating at the beginning that the contents of the hearing were not to be publicized. Among the former comfort women, there were various cases; there were some who spoke indifferently and others whose memories had become confused. However, the Japanese side maintained from start to finish an attitude of listening sincerely to what the former comfort women had to say. From the Government of the ROK, only a member of the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended as an observer at the start of the hearings on each day.

(7) Regarding the status of the hearings, rather than a clarification of the facts, the intention was to show the sincere attitude of the Government of Japan in clarifying the facts as a process based on the details of the events up to that point by holding the hearings of the comfort women, and stand by with the former comfort women to deeply understand their feelings, and hence the results of it were not compared to post-facto corroborating investigations or other testimonies. The relationship between the hearings and the Kono Statement that was released immediately after it was that, prior to the holding of the hearings, the relevant ministries had practically finished compiling the findings of the additional inquiries and they had already prepared the original draft of the Kono Statement prior to the completion of the hearings (refer to 5 below).

### 5. Communication on the Wording of the Kono Statement

(1) After the announcement in July 1992 by Chief Secretary Kato, the Japanese side aimed to release some sort of announcements on its clarification of facts and follow-up measures, and held detailed discussions with the ROK side. In communication between Japan and ROK officials in March 1993, the ROK side stated that the Japanese announcement should not be treated as an outcome of discussions with the ROK, but ultimately treated as something independently released by the Japanese side, and that its impression was that it would prefer the content of the announcement to be as close as possible to the content that would satisfy the ROK. In communication between Japan and ROK officials in May 1993, the Japanese side stated it wanted to avoid a negative response by the Government of the ROK to its announcement. Hence, with regards to the recognition on the involvement of "coerciveness," the Japanese side stated that, while not word-for-word, it wanted to communicate with the ROK on this issue. In response to this, the ROK side stated it would cooperate in various ways and that it wanted to know the content of the announcement and be notified of the wording of it.

In the Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers' Meeting on July 28, 1993, Foreign Minister Muto stated, "we want to consult in advance with members of your Government on the wording of the announcement," and that "regarding this (comfort women) issue we want to basically put a full stop to it diplomatically. President Kim Yong-sam stated that if the Japanese side was completely sincere in its announcement, he considered that he would explain the announcement to the people of his country, and in this case, it was possible to obtain the understanding of the people of the ROK could be obtained. Based on this point, we would definitely want the President to explain the views of Japan." In response to this, Foreign Minister Han Sung-joo stated that, "we wish to appreciate the efforts and the sincerity of Japan regarding this issue. We hope that President Kim Yong-sam will be able to explain the findings of the inquiry by Japan to the people of the ROK in a form that will be able to satisfy them. In addition, we expect that through this, ROK-Japan relations will come to be future-oriented, which is an outcome that the ROK is also hoping for."

(2) Meanwhile on the Japanese side, even after the announcement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kato, the relevant ministries and agencies continuously investigated related documents and additionally conducted search and investigation of documents in the United States National Archives and Records Administration and in other locations. With these documents that were obtained in this way as a basis, it also began to analyze hearings of military-related parties and those responsible for managing the comfort stations, as well as testimonies collected by the Korean Council, and was able to practically finish compiling the report on the study results. The recognition obtained through these series of studies was that it was not possible to confirm that women were "forcefully recruited."

(3) Subsequently, actual coordination on the wording of the statement began between Japan and the ROK in response to the above-mentioned Foreign Ministers' Meeting. By July 29, 1993, at the latest, which was before the end of the hearings of the comfort women (held July 26 to 30, 1993), the Government of Japan had already prepared the draft of the statement based on the results of the study of the relevant documents (refer to 4 (7) above).

The coordination on the wording of the statement took place up until August 3, the day before the statement was to be announced, between the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the ROK Embassy in Japan, and the Japanese Embassy in the ROK and the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They were conducted intensively and it was

confirmed that the initial comments from the ROK were received at the latest by July 31. In these comments, the ROK stated that while it considered that the content of the announcement should be independently decided on by the Government of Japan and that it did not in any way consider it to be an outcome of a negotiation, but in order to solve this issue, it must be appreciated by the people of the ROK and from this perspective, it hoped that a part of the statement be amended, and that if the Government of Japan released the statement without responding to this point, then the Government of the ROK would not be able to positively respond to it. Subsequently, on several occasions during the above-described period of coordination on the wording of the statement, the ROK side provided various comments, including on the issue of “coerciveness,” on the establishment of the comfort stations, and on the recruitment of the comfort women. In response, on the Japanese side, the Cabinet Councilors’ Office on External Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued to closely cooperate and share information, and within the limit of not distorting the relevant facts based on the study that had taken place up until that time, it coordinated with the Government of the ROK on the wording of the statement with a stance of accepting those intentions and requests of the Government of the ROK that it could accept, and rejecting those that it could not accept.

In the coordination with the ROK, the three main points of contention were as follows: (i) the involvement of the military in the establishment of the comfort stations; (ii) the involvement of the military in the recruitment of the comfort women; (iii) the “coerciveness” of the recruitment of the comfort women.

Regarding the involvement of the military in the establishment of the comfort stations, the expression that the Japanese side offered was that they were the “intention” of the military authorities, but the ROK requested this expression be changed to “instruction.” However, the Japanese side could not accept this as it could not confirm that the military “instructed” the establishment of the comfort stations and proposed instead the expression of “requested.”

Also, regarding the involvement of the military in the recruitment of the comfort women, the ROK requested wording that was equivalent to “the military or recruiters who were instructed by the military,” or in other words, that the recruitment was carried out by the military or that the military instructed other recruiters to do so. But the Japanese side considered that the recruitment was not carried out by the military, but mainly by recruiters who had done so based on the “intentions” of the military, and hence could not accept that the military were the main party that carried out the recruitment. Also, as the Japan side could not confirm that the military “instructed” the

recruiters to carry out the recruitment, it proposed that the expression be changed to that the military “requested” the recruiters carry out the recruitment.

In response to this, the ROK wanted the expression “ordered” used for the involvement of the military in both the establishment of the comfort stations and the recruitment of the comfort women, but the Japanese side did not accept it. Ultimately, it was decided on the wording that the comfort stations were established and managed according to the military authorities’ “request,” and also the recruiters were “requested” to carry out the recruitment by the military.

Regarding an apology and feelings of remorse, the Japanese side presented a draft that included “(it) severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies.” The ROK side requested the addition of “remorse” to the wording of this expression of “apology” to which the Japanese side agreed.

In this coordination process, the draft was consulted to as high as Prime Minister Miyazawa on the Japanese side and President Kim Yong-sam on the ROK side and acquired their final consent. But the question of how “coerciveness” of the recruitment of the comfort women would be expressed and worded in the statement constituted the main issue of contention in the communication with the ROK side.

Even at the stage of August 2, the ROK side stated that, with exceptions on some main points, the Japanese side made some proposals that could be acceptable for both sides in view of meeting the expectations of the ROK side, and the differences in the two sides’ perceptions about the main points were not that large. However, it also added that there were limits that it could not go beyond, and that the people of the ROK would not accept any suggestion that some of women became comfort women voluntarily. Specifically, regarding the phrase in the Japanese side’s draft of “in many cases they were recruited against their own will (by the recruiters), through coaxing, coercion, etc.” the ROK side requested the removal of the phrase “in many cases,” but the Japanese side refused as it was difficult for it to accept that the women were recruited against their will in every case. Also, coordination took place until the last moment on “coerciveness” to describe the recruitment of the comfort women on the Korean Peninsula. Communication continued until the evening of August 2, based on the point that “The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese rule in those days,” if seen across the stages of their “recruitment, transfer, control, etc., ” regardless of how they were recruited, the sense that this was conducted as a whole against the will of the individuals was finally coordinated as being expressed as “generally against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.”

Finally, on the evening of August 3, the ROK Embassy in Japan notified the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that based on instructions by the home country, President Kim Yong-sam had appreciated the current (final) draft presented by the Japanese side and communicated to it that the Government of the ROK accepted the wording of the draft. At this point, a final agreement was reached on the wording of the Kono Statement.

(4) As can be referred above in (2), the Japanese side, under the recognition that the so called "forcefully taking away" of women could not be confirmed based on the studies including inquiry on relevant documents by relevant ministries and agencies, document searches at the US National Archives and Records Administration, as well as hearings of military parties and managers of comfort stations and analysis of testimonies collected by the Korean Council, dealt with the coordination on the wording of the Kono Statement with the Korean side with a stance that, within the limits of not distorting the facts based on the studies, it would accept those intentions and requests of the Government of the ROK that it could accept, and reject those that it could not accept.

Regarding such prior communication that was conducted between Japan and the ROK, on August 2, 1993, the Japanese side stated that it should not be disclosed to the media, and the ROK side agreed to this. In addition, the ROK side was to say that it had received the content of the statement by fax from the Japanese side only just before the announcement. Also, on the release of the statement on August 4, the response guidelines prepared by Japanese officials included the response line which read that there had been "no prior consultation" with the ROK side and that the result of the study was communicated immediately before."

(5) With such background, on August 4, 1993, the Japanese side announced the summary of the findings of the study that had taken place up to that time through Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono, and also released a statement (the Kono Statement).

#### **Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono (4 August 1993)**

The Government of Japan has been conducting a study on the issue of "wartime comfort women" since December 1991. I wish to announce the findings as a result of that study.

As a result of the study, which indicates that comfort stations were operated in extensive areas for long periods, it is apparent that there existed a great number of comfort women. Comfort stations were operated in response to the request of the military authorities of the day. The then

Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations and the transfer of comfort women. The recruitment of the comfort women was conducted mainly by private recruiters who acted in response to the request of the military. The Government study has revealed that in many cases they were recruited against their own will, through coaxing, coercion, etc., and that, at times, administrative/military personnel directly took part in the recruitment. They lived in misery at comfort stations under a coercive atmosphere.

As to the origin of those comfort women who were transferred to the war areas, excluding those from Japan, those from the Korean Peninsula accounted for a large part. The Korean Peninsula was under Japanese rule in those days, and their recruitment, transfer, control, etc., were conducted generally against their will, through coaxing, coercion, etc.

Undeniably, this was an act, with the involvement of the military authorities of the day, that severely injured the honor and dignity of many women. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity once again to extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those, irrespective of place of origin, who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

It is incumbent upon us, the Government of Japan, to continue to consider seriously, while listening to the views of learned circles, how best we can express this sentiment.

We shall face squarely the historical facts as described above instead of evading them, and take them to heart as lessons of history. We hereby reiterate our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history.

As actions have been brought to court in Japan and interests have been shown in this issue outside Japan, the Government of Japan shall continue to pay full attention to this matter, including private researched related thereto.

(6) Regarding the recognition of the issue of “coerciveness,” at a press conference held by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono on the same day, when questioned about whether Japan had recognized the fact that the women had been forcefully taken away, he stated that “we accept that to be the case.”

Also, when it was pointed out that the word “coercion” was not used in the context of the recruitment of the comfort women but in the description of their lives at the comfort stations, Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono stated, “the Statement states that “(they) were recruited by coaxing and coercion against their will.” One can understand the meaning of being recruited against their will.”

Further, when asked was there not any descriptions found in official documents that supported the notion that they were transported coercively, Chief Cabinet Secretary

Kono stated, “within the term “coercion,” there are physical coercion and psychological coercion”, and “many instances (of psychological coercion) would not have been recorded in administrative/military records,” but “there had been sufficient investigations on whether or not there were such cases or not,” including hearings or collection of testimonies of former wartime comfort women and hearing from former managers of comfort stations, and from these sources “it is clear after the studies that in many cases the women were transported against their will as stated here (in the Statement)” “and that they lived after being recruited in a condition where their wills were deprived.

(7) After the release of the Kono Statement, the ROK’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs released its assessment of the statement, stating that it appreciated that “the Government of Japan, through this announcement, recognizes the overall involvement of force in the recruitment, transportation, and administration of the comfort women for Japanese troops, and in addition to apologizing to the victims, and expressing its remorse for its actions, it expresses its resolve to view this squarely as a lesson of history.” At the same time the Japanese Embassy in the ROK pointed out to the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the ROK press was reporting the facts without attachment, and there were a lot of rather positive responses of it, and that the ROK’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been actively cooperating. It also reported that the background to this was that, in addition to the sincerity of the Japanese side in terms of the result of its study and the statement, consultations had been frequently held with the Government of the ROK regarding the handling of this issue, and the Japanese side had frankly communicated its thoughts and also, to the greatest possible extent, had incorporated the comments of the ROK side.

(8) With the release of the Kono Statement, more detailed discussions were held between the two countries regarding the best way to implement “measures” for the former comfort women by the Japanese side, which was communicated in various ways with the ROK side (refer to the next section).

**II. Details of the activities of the “National Fund for Asian Peace and Women”  
(subsequently, “the Fund”) in the ROK**

**1. Up to the Establishment of the Fund (1993 to 1994)**

(1) As is described in the previous section, in the communication between the Governments of Japan and ROK on the comfort women issue, the clarifying of facts and follow-up measures were perceived to be a package. In the Kono Statement of August 4, 1993, Japan stated that “...while listening to the views of learned circles, how best we can express this sentiment (of apology and remorse). We shall face squarely the historical facts as described above instead of evading them, and take them to heart as lessons of history. We hereby reiterate our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history.” Japan confirmed the views of the Government of the ROK on what sorts of “measures” it ought to take for the former comfort women, and the ROK side responded that its understanding was that as settlement had already been reached for the issue of the legal compensation from Japan to the ROK, therefore if some other measures were to be taken, rather than being legal compensation, they should officially be unilateral measures taken by the Japanese side, and that they should not be of a nature that the Korean side would meddle.

(2) Subsequently, the Governments of Japan and the ROK repeatedly communicated on the specific measures to be taken for the former comfort women, but whatever specific measures the Government of Japan implemented, the problems concerning properties and claims between the two countries and their nationals, which includes the comfort women issue, had in legal terms already been settled completely and finally. Therefore, it was confirmed to the ROK side that Japan expected that no measures would be carried out to compensate individuals among the former comfort women in the ROK. The ROK side considered this issue to be dealt by the Japanese side on its own as part of its coming into terms with its post-war issues, and also responded that it would not request any material compensation from the Government of Japan and that it would not be involved in measures taken by the Japanese side. Furthermore, during the summer of the following year of 1994, in the communication between officials of Japan and the ROK, the ROK side frankly explained that if felt that that within the ROK, there are views expressed by the victims and the related groups, and that while on the one hand is a popular opinion that demands compensation, while the other popular opinion is that whether it be comfort women issue are not, demands against the Government of Japan

should end sooner or later, and in terms of numbers, the latter opinion were probably in the majority.

(3) On December 7, 1994, the “First Report” was issued by the Subcommittee to Address the Wartime Comfort Women Issue, which was established under the “Ruling Parties’ Project to Deal with Issues Fifty Years After the War set up by the three ruling parties (the Social Democratic Party, the Liberal Democratic Party, and New Party Sakigake). The report stated that, along with the establishment of a citizen-participation type fund and measures to be implemented for the former comfort women, in order that the mistakes of the past not be repeated, it would assist in activities that educate, prevent, and resolve current issues relating to the honor and dignity of women, such as violence against women and that the Government would cooperate to its full extent with the Fund, including through financial contribution.

(4) On June 13, 1995, the Government of Japan reported in advance to the ROK side on its decision to officially announce the Fund the following day, intended for those former comfort women in the ROK, Taiwan, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Netherlands. The objective in establishing it and the basic characteristics of its operations were described in the “Statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi on the Establishment of the Asian Fund for Women.” The Government of the ROK stated that (i) as a general impression, even if it would not satisfy the relevant parties, the Government of the ROK felt that it could be positively appreciated on several points; (ii) President Kim Yong-sam has continued to address that compensation for the comfort women is not necessary, but also clearly indicated that there should be a far reaching fact-finding on this issue; (iii) the points that the ROK side had requested, that it include an official attribute of being implemented by the Government of Japan and that it express feelings of apology from the Government of Japan, where generally included in it, and hence the ROK could respond positively on these points. At the same time, it responded that the Government of the ROK wanted to cooperate as much as possible to explain Japan’s efforts to the relevant groups. On the following day, June 14, Chief Cabinet Secretary Igarashi released the following statement.

**Statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi on the Establishment of the Asian Fund for Women (14 June 1995)**

To follow up the statement made in August, 1994, by Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, and in accordance with discussions of the Ruling Parties’ Project Team for 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issues,

and after consideration within the Government, based on our remorse for the past on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the end of the War, the projects of the "Asian Peace and Friendship Fund for Women" will be undertaken as follows.

1. The following activities will be conducted for the former wartime comfort women, through the cooperation of the Japanese People and the Government:
  - (a) The Fund will raise funds in the private sector as a means to enact the Japanese people's atonement for former wartime comfort women.
  - (b) The Fund will support those conducting medical and welfare projects and other similar projects which are of service to former wartime comfort women, through the use of government funding and other funds.
  - (c) When these projects are implemented, the Government will express the nation's feelings of sincere remorse and apology to the former wartime comfort women.
  - (d) In addition, the Government will collate historical documents on past wartime comfort women, to serve as a lesson of history.
2. As its project addressing issues related to the honor and dignity of women, including the projects mentioned in 1 (b) above, the Fund will, through the use of government funding and other funds, support those who undertake projects that address contemporary problems, such as violence against women.
3. The names of those who have given their support to date, acting as "proponents" calling on a broad range of Japanese people to cooperate with the projects of the "Asian Peace and Friendship Fund for Women," are listed separately.

Responding to the above, the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs released the following Ministry of Foreign Affairs comment.

**ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs comment regarding the announcement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kozo Igarashi (June, 1995)**

1. The Government of the ROK considers that, regarding the follow-up to the wartime comfort women issue, fundamentally the outcome of the fact-finding investigation was a matter independently decided upon by the Government of Japan, but that in order to facilitate a resolution to the wartime comfort women issue, we have been pointing to the need to reflect the items required by the relevant parties to the greatest possible extent.
2. The current establishment of the Fund by the Government of Japan is tempered with an official

attribute of being partially funded from the Government's budget, and also when the Fund's operations are carried out in the future, on the points that it clearly includes an expression of sincere remorse and apology as a nation to the relevant parties, a fact-finding of the past, and that this problem be considered as a lesson to be learned from history, we appreciate it to be a sincere measure that to a certain extent reflects the requirements of the relevant parties up to this time.

3. The Government of the ROK hopes that going forward, with the opportunity provided by this establishment of the Fund by Japan, the historical facts within the various problems in our countries' pasts will be clarified and by striving positively in order to resolve them, the relations between our two neighboring countries will develop to be future-oriented, friendly relations based on the correct recognition of history.

## 2. The Initial Period after the Establishment of the Fund (1995 to 1996)

(1) Conversely, the victim support groups in the ROK labeled the Fund as "payment for services" from private-sector organizations, and criticized the approach of the Government of Japan and the Fund. Based on this response, although the Government of the ROK released a statement in July 1995 which the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed its appreciation on the announcement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, it addressed its position that the victim support groups strongly opposed the ROK's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which put the ROK side in a difficult position, making it hard to openly cooperate with the Japanese Government under the current circumstances but wanting to cooperate with the Japanese Government behind-the-scenes.

(2) In July 1996, the Fund decided to provide the former comfort women with "atonement money" and "a letter of apology" from the Prime Minister, and also to carry out medical and welfare projects. With regards to the "letter of apology" from the Prime Minister, the Government of the ROK pointed out while there was an apology from the Government of Japan to the Government of the ROK, but the reaction of the victims was that they felt it was not an apology to them individually. Therefore Japan decided it to be the form of a letter by the Prime Minister as expressing an apology. In order for the Government of Japan to explain this decision to the ROK side, it asked for talks with the Association of the Bereaved and the Korean Council via the Government of the ROK, but both organizations indicated their view that they were not able to accept the provision of the "private-sector funds."

(3) From the Government of the ROK side, it addressed its wishes that (i) whatever form the Japanese Government would take needs to satisfy the victims (ii) after Japan declares that it would be impossible to provide state compensation to the victims in legal terms, whether it could address its feelings of apology from the government, and in any way make it seem like as if it is a state compensation, and (iii) whether the Government of Japan could issue a message on the lines of, “We want to hold sincere discussions in the future with regards to our relationship with the ROK,” and it expressed its intentions of hoping to take some time and discuss quietly with the Japanese side on what the subsequent, specific measures Japan will take.

(4) The Fund’s projects began in the Philippines in August of the same year, and in the same month, the Fund, under a policy of implementing projects to the victims that had received the recognition from the Government of the ROK, sent a Team for Dialogue comprised of members of the Fund Advisory Committee to the ROK to meet with and explain the project to ten of the victims. Then in December of the same year, seven of the former comfort women announced that they would accept the efforts of the Fund and would be recipients of its project.

### 3. Implementing Projects for Seven Former Comfort Women (January 1997)

(1) On the implementation of projects for the seven women described above, on January 10, 1997 (the day prior to the launch of the project), the Government of Japan reported in advance to the ROK Embassy in Japan that the Fund seemed to have decided to implement the projects to the former comfort women who had expressed their willingness to receive it. The Government of the ROK responded that (i) there will be no solution unless the project was provided in a form that would satisfy both the related groups and the victims, and (ii) if the project was only implemented to some of the former comfort women, it is likely that the related groups will react harshly to it, and as it was immediately prior to the Japan-ROK Foreign Ministers’ Meeting and Summit, it considered the timing to be bad.

(2) On the following day, January 11, a group representing the Fund visited the seven former comfort women in Seoul and delivered “a letter of apology” from the Prime Minister, clarifying to the ROK media the facts of the project, and also explaining the Fund itself.

### **Letter from the Prime Minister to the Former Comfort Women**

Dear Madam,

On the occasion that the Asian Women's Fund, in cooperation with the Government and the people of Japan, offers atonement from the Japanese people to the former wartime comfort women, I wish to express my feelings as well.

The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women. As Prime Minister of Japan, I thus extend anew my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

We must not evade the weight of the past, nor should we evade our responsibilities for the future. I believe that our country, painfully aware of its moral responsibilities, with feelings of apology and remorse, should face up squarely to its past history and accurately convey it to future generations. Furthermore, Japan also should take an active part in dealing with violence and other forms of injustice to the honor and dignity of women. Finally, I pray from the bottom of my heart that each of you will find peace for the rest of your lives.

Respectfully yours,

Prime Minister of Japan

(Prime Ministers who signed the letter are: Ryutaro Hashimoto, Keizo Obuchi, Yoshiro Mori and Junichiro Koizumi)

In response to this, the ROK media criticized the Fund's activities and the victim support groups began harassing the seven former comfort women, and also other comfort women seeking to newly apply for the Fund. The victim support group publically mentioned the real names of the seven former comfort women and in addition, telephoned them and criticized them for receiving money from a "private-sector fund," saying that by doing so, they voluntarily recognized themselves to be "prostitutes." Subsequently, parties related to the groups even visited the homes of the former comfort women who had newly declared that they would accept projects from the Fund in order to press them not to accept any "dirty money from Japan."

(3) Also, immediately afterwards, the Government of the ROK stated its regrets and added that it considered it natural that they should receive records from the Fund on to whom it was handing out the projects, and that the Japanese side perhaps were a little impatient in doing so, and that the ROK was really perplexed about the Fund's activities

in the ROK.

(4) The following week during the Foreign Ministers' Meeting of Japan and the ROK, ROK's Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoo Chong-ha commented that it was extremely regrettable that the Fund had started projects the previous weekend and that money was being given to the former comfort women, and demanded the withdrawal of the project and the temporary suspension of payments in the future. Also, during the courtesy call of Japan's Foreign Minister Ikeda to President Kim Yong-san, the President said that this was a sensitive issue when viewed from the perspective of the feelings of the ROK people, and that while it had been reported to him that this issue had been discussed at the Foreign Ministers' Meeting, he felt that the recent measures taken by the Fund has a strongly detrimental impact on public sentiment in the ROK which was regrettable, and that he hoped that the measures would not be taken again in the future.

#### 4. The Temporary Suspension of the Fund (February 1997 to January 1998)

(1) Based on the fact that in the ROK, the seven former comfort women who had received the project from the Fund were being subject to continual harassment, the Fund decided to temporarily postpone the project and adopt a more cautious approach. On the other hand, some of the victim support groups reacted positively to coordinating with the former comfort women who wanted to receive the project from the Fund, and as the number of former comfort women who wanted to receive the project increased, the Fund investigated various ways in order to gain the understanding of the ROK in order to continue the projects; for example, it explored the possibility of placing newspaper advertisements in the ROK.

(2) Subsequently, between the summer and fall of 1997, discussions were held on several occasions between the Government of Japan and parties related to the Fund about placing advertisements in the ROK and on restarting the projects. The Government of Japan lobbied the Fund to postpone the restarting of the project because of the upcoming presidential election in the ROK, and also because of the fisheries negotiations taking place between Japan and the ROK, while the Fund itself, while not changing its standpoint that it was unconvinced by the Government's stance, did take into account the sensitive situation that existed between Japan and the ROK and within ROK, and agreed to postpone placing newspaper advertisements on several occasions.

(3) However, based on the extremely strong desire of the Fund to let as many Korean former comfort women be informed about the Fund's activities and its desire to gain their understanding, and as newspaper companies in the ROK had agreed to publish the advertisement, the Government of Japan judged that if it were done after the presidential election on December 18, 1998, and also if it were done in a quiet and discreet manner, then it had no choice but to agree that advertisements be placed; this decision was approved by Foreign Minister Obuchi.

#### 5. The Fund Places Advertisements in Newspapers (January 1998)

(1) At the beginning of January 1998, in the communication between the officials of Japan and the ROK, the Japanese side explained in advance that the Fund intended to place newspaper advertisements (in four newspapers) with the objective of fostering understanding of the Fund's activities within the ROK. The Government of the ROK responded that unilateral measures taken by the Fund will not resolve the issue and suggested that a dialogue take place between the Korean Council and the Fund, and that it would need a little more time in order to bring together the various opinions within the Korean Council.

(2) On January 6, 1998, following the actual publication of the advertisements, the Government of the ROK responded that it would prefer that the Japanese side demonstrated flexibility, that it did not hurry, and deal with this issue in such a way that it would disappear gradually without being too conspicuous, and that it felt the recent newspaper advertisements were extremely provocative.

#### 6. The Temporary Suspension of Payments of Atonement Money through the Fund (February 1998 to February 1999)

(1) In March 1998, the Kim Dae-jung administration was inaugurated and the Government of the ROK decided to provide "life-support fund" to the former comfort women instead of demanding state compensation from the Government of Japan. The Government of the ROK decided that the former comfort women who had already received money from the Fund would not be eligible for the life-support fund, but explained that such policy is not intended to openly object the Fund nor a measure to criticize its activities.

(2) Furthermore, during this period, the Government of the ROK stated that President Kim Dae-jung himself wanted any financial issues to be sorted out and was of the

opinion that it should not become an issue between the two governments. Furthermore, the ROK stated with feelings of sympathy towards the Fund, that it would be better for this issue of the Fund be put to an end so that it would not become an issue between the two governments.

#### 7. Conversion to Medical and Welfare Projects by the Korean Red Cross (March 1999-July 1999)

(1) With the Fund's medical and welfare projects in the Netherlands commencing smoothly in July 1998, the Fund began to consider converting its provision of "atonement money" to medical and treatment projects instead. At the end of January 1999, the Fund decided to inquire to the KRC for its cooperation. In the communication between officials from Japan and the ROK, the ROK side shared the view to the fundamental changes to the Fund's activities, and indicated that it would be appropriate for the ROK government to positively encourage the KRC once the discussions between the Japanese side and the KRC makes progress.

(2) However, during the communication between officials of Japan and the ROK at the end of March 1999, the Government of the ROK suddenly changed its policy. It indicated that whatever effort was done or not done on this issue, there was going to be criticism and that a calmer approach was necessary, and because the KRC was considered to be affiliated with the Government of the ROK, strong opposition could be expected and hence it wanted to scrap this proposal. In response to this, the Japanese side protested that this proposal was made from the perspective that it would not have an adverse effect on the future-oriented Japan-ROK relationship that were cultivated by the visit of President Kim Dae-jung to Japan, and it obtained the Prime Minister's approval upon convincing the Fund that showed strong disapproval to end its original project, and therefore, it was difficult to understand the suggestions by the ROK. At the end, because it could not gain the understanding of the ROK side, the conversion of the project could not be realized.

#### 8. The Suspension of the Fund with Difficulties of Converting the Project (July 1999 to May 2002)

(1) The Fund was unable to convert its project to medical and welfare projects and in July 1999, its activities were suspended. This state of suspension continued until February 2002, but on February 20, the Fund lifted suspension and decided to set a deadline for project applications within the ROK of May 1 of the same year.

(2) In communication between officials of Japan and the ROK in April 2002, the Government of the ROK once again expressed its opposition to the Fund's provision of "atonement money" and to its medical and welfare projects. On May 1, acceptance of project applications in the ROK ended and the Fund's activities in ROK that had started in January 1997 drew to a close.

#### 9. The Results of the Fund's Activities in the ROK

(1) The Fund, which was established in 1995, raised funds of approximately 600 million yen, and by the end of March 2007 when the whole project ended with the completion of the projects in Indonesia, the Government of Japan provided approximately 4.8 billion yen either in the form of contributions or subsidies. In terms of the Fund's activities in the ROK, "atonement money" of 2 million yen, the source of which was donations from the private sector, and 3 million yen for medical and welfare projects, the source of which was government contributions (for a total of 5 million yen per person), were provided to a total of 61 former comfort women in the ROK up to the end of the Fund's activities, and in addition, all the comfort women that received "atonement money" also received a letter of apology signed by the Prime Minister at that time. The breakdown of those who received the Prime Minister's letter was 27 during the Hashimoto administration, 24 during the Obuchi administration, one during the Mori administration and nine during the Koizumi administration.

(2) The Fund projects in the Philippines, Indonesia, and the Netherlands were implemented with the understanding and positive reception by the government and related groups of the respective country. But in the ROK, it was greatly affected by the domestic situation within the ROK as well as the bilateral relationship between Japan and the ROK, and the Fund was not able to gain the understanding of the Government of the ROK or its people on its activities. However, from the former comfort women in ROK there were words of gratitude; one former comfort women said that she never thought that during her lifetime she would receive apologies from the Prime Minister and money, and that she came to fully understand the feelings of good will of the Japanese people and wanted to thank them very much.

(3) Furthermore, another person needed money in order to have medical operations and decided to accept the "atonement money" by the Fund. At first, she did not want to meet a Fund representative, but when the representative read the Prime Minister's letter

aloud to her, she raise her voice, broke down in tears, hugged the representative. In this way, the Fund believed that the apology and remorse expressed by the Japanese Government and people were accepted, and contrary to the situation within the ROK, the Fund came to be appreciated by the former comfort women.

(End)