

**Speech by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
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Today, it is my great pleasure to join with top leaders from Japan and around the world. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who is attending this event.

Before getting started, let me introduce the story of one brave Japanese woman. Her name is Ms. Marie Oniwa. She works in the Democratic Republic of the Congo as the Head of the Sexual Violence Unit of the United Nations Peacekeeping mission. Her goal is to realize freedom from sexual violence for the entire country. Toward such a goal, she liaises with government officials, collaborates with civil society, and engages in discussion with religious leaders, to involve all of the local society.

She persuades ministers to visit places where violent acts have occurred, but she never forces local women to take up activism or start protests. However, whenever those women raise their own voice, she is there to support them, fighting alongside them against sexual violence.

Ms. Oniwa's story has provided us with an important lesson. I would like to propose that we start our discussion from there.

The 21st century has to be a century that is free from violations of the human rights of women. Building on this strong commitment, Japan has strengthened our cooperation with the Office of the SRSG on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Let me renew and strengthen my commitment to tackle those challenges with Special Representative Ms. Zainab Bangura, who joins us today.

Let's once again remind ourselves that the participation of women in society, including in peacetime, is the foundation for preventing conflicts and building peace. The Government of Japan is about to complete its action plan pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325 (thirteen twenty-five) in close cooperation with civil society, so that this plan can become truly effective.

Women play a crucial role also in creating a society that is resilient to disasters as well as in the process of post-disaster reconstruction. Japan has experienced countless hardships due to natural disasters, but we have recovered from such tragedies each and every time. Just recently, we saw yet another disaster in Hiroshima, where I am from.

However, I believe that the community empowered by women, can successfully reconstruct itself.

When we joined CSW held in March, Japan once again submitted a resolution on "Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Natural Disasters," building on the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake. In March next year, Japan will host the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, all to share our experience with the world, including women's perspectives.

The concept of "human security" constitutes one of the key pillars of our international cooperation strategy. Unless we take a serious look at individuals, there is always the risk that those who tend to face social vulnerabilities, such as women, are left behind in receiving our assistance. Japan has been committed to "leave no one behind" and has provided a wide range of support methods to empower women, protect and promote their rights, and improve their access to medical services by promoting universal health coverage.

If we succeed in mainstreaming the idea of "human security" throughout the world and if we properly reflect this idea in the Post-2015 Development Agenda, I am confident that our support will be endured to reach women.

Cooperation with the international community is essential. Japan thus remains committed to deepening our cooperation with international organizations, including UNDP, led by Ms. Helen Clark, who is joining us today.

I am delighted to see UN Women continuing to expand its scope of operations under the leadership of Executive Director Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka, who is also joining us today. Japan has succeeded in increasing our contributions five times over the past year. I will renew my commitment here that we become one of its leading donors, supporting many more projects. This brings us to another piece of great news: The opening of a UN Women's office in Tokyo. I would like to express my deep respect to Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka and Mayor Hironobu Narisawa of Tokyo's Bunkyo Ward who is also joining us today for their great work.

If you empower women, that will empower children, then men, and then communities. This is the positive chain reaction that women's empowerment can bring for the future.

I look forward to your discussions today, and I hope that you can come up with many useful proposals that can build links in this chain reaction.