

Statement by Kazuko SHIRAIISHI,  
Ambassador for Women, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs,  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,  
At the 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Community of Democracies Governing Council  
Geneva  
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Ms. Kate Gilmore, Deputy High Commissioner for Human Rights

Mr. Tom Malinowski, Assistant Secretary, U.S. Department of State, Community of Democracies Chair

H.E. Maria Leissner, Secretary General, Community of Democracies

Distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

First and foremost, on behalf of the Government of Japan, let me express my deepest gratitude and respect to the efforts of the Government of United States as the Chair and the Permanent Secretariat of Community of Democracies for hosting the 20<sup>th</sup> CD Governing Council. It is my great honour to have the opportunity to address at the High-Level Segment of the Community of Democracies, which has been playing an important role as a platform for democratization of the world since its foundation in 2000.

1. Japan's Foreign Policy and Democracy

Ladies and Gentleman,

The development of democracy forms the foundation for the international community to achieve sustainable peace, stability and prosperity through protection and promotion of human rights.

Since the end of World War II, Japan, as a peaceful nation, has attached great importance to the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, basic human rights and rule of law, was fostering growth of these. Japan has supported the building of a prosperous society where people can enjoy peace and happiness, as well as support the democratization and development of Asia and other countries.

From the perspective of "Proactive Contribution to Peace", Japan will continue to contribute actively on global issues, in collaboration with the Community of Democracies and those countries with which we share fundamental values.

2. Democracy and Development

Democracy is a work requiring the constant effort, courage and wisdom of people. Taking an outward look from inside the world, we are facing threats against basic values, such as

conflict, violent extremism and natural disaster. In order to consolidate and sustain democracy, we should not undermine human dignity of individuals.

It is extremely important for the developing countries to enhance their democratic foundation in order to promote mid-long term stability and development. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted last year, states democracy, good governance and the rule of laws are essential for the sustainable development. Therefore, we need to fully support and encourage the developing countries' active initiatives toward the democratization.

Based on our belief that the strong will and ownership of the developing countries is essential for the democratization, Japan has been assisting the democratization process in the fields of legal and judicial systems, governance systems, electoral reform and media collaborating with each developing countries.

Regarding the development of the legal and judicial systems, Japan has been providing the assistance for the promotion of the democratic process in Nepal, such as the provision of the training program in Japan and the dispatch of Japanese experts for the improvement of the legal system and judicial capacity.

Regarding the improvement in governance, Japan has been providing the technical training programs in order to enhance the governance capacity in 11 conflict affected countries such as Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire.

Regarding the support of the electoral reform, Japan has realized various kinds of assistance. For example, for Myanmar's general election, we dispatched an election observer mission and provided material aid(solar lamps for polling station). For Cambodia, we dispatched missions and also organized an invitation program for Cambodian parties. For Afghanistan's presidential election, we provided the material aid and distributed them to poll stations all over the country. For the presidential by-election in Zambia, we provided Emergency Grant Aid to finance the purchase of equipment relating to voting education and public awareness in order to support the smooth implementation of the election.

Regarding the assistance to the media, Japan has been providing assistance to the Project for Institutional Capacity Development of National TV and Radio station in South Sudan. The establishment of neutral media that is not exploited by political leaders is a key challenge in the conflict prevention.

Last year, Japan hosted the "High-Level Seminar on Peace Building National Reconciliation and Democratization in Asia" in Tokyo. The seminar was attended by Honorable Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, who will make a statement later on. Japan, as an Asian friend of Sri Lanka, would continue assisting

Sri Lanka's effort towards the peacebuilding including the dispatch of Japanese experts Mr. Motoo Noguchi.

### 3. Democracy and Women

Women's empowerment is indispensable condition to make democracy work and the protection of women's rights often becomes a key issue in the democratization process.

Japan has been actively promoting the women's empowerment in order to create a society where all women shine and be able to demonstrate their power to the fullest extent.

For instance, through UN Women, Japan is supporting the female victims suffered from the conflicts and violent extremism in Africa and Middle-East. While protecting women's rights, Japan places its importance to the role of women in the fields of the peacebuilding and economic activities, and contributes to the social stability through the promotion of women's empowerment. This year, Japan has approved UN women's 14 projects worth US\$22million. Among them, Japan will provide the inclusive DDR assistance in the Central Africa and the educational assistance for the comprehensive development and social reform in Egypt.

Last year, Japan has decided to participate in the CD's Working Group on "Women and Democracy" in order to contribute to the promotion of democracy sharing our experience and knowledge.

### 4. Conclusion

Ladies and Gentleman,

Democracy cannot be achieved overnight. Japan recognizes, in the light of our own experience, that it is indispensable to protect and respect basic values such as democracy and human rights in order to maintain the stable development of nation states.

Japan, with other CD countries and in collaboration with the international community, intends to further support the enhancement of democracy in Asia and in the world.

I thank you for your kind attention.