

State Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. UTO's video message
at the side event by the Global Survivors Fund

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am UTO Takashi, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Today, as a co-host member state of this event by the Global Survivors Fund, I am honored to send a message on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Sexual violence in conflict is a serious crime that has not been eradicated in the international community to this day. The honor and dignity of victims and survivors continue to be deeply hurt by sexual violence in conflict. It has also hindered the financial independence of survivors. Japan strongly agrees with the purpose of the Fund to support the independence of survivors who were injured by sexual violence in conflict, and has supported the Fund's activities since its establishment. First and foremost, I would like to express my respect for Dr. Denis Mukwege and Ms. Nadia Murad, who were the leading actors for the establishment of the Fund.

On our part, Japan has contributed a total of four million euros to the Fund and has been actively involved in its operation as a board member. We have also funded projects related to sexual violence in conflict, which are implemented by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, and have contributed to the creation of mechanisms to punish perpetrators. Above all, it is most important to draw near to and support those who have been severely suffering physically and mentally. In order to eliminate sexual violence in conflict, we will continue to provide various support in cooperation with all concerned parties.

Since the beginning of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on vulnerable women and girls. According to a report by the United Nations, survivors of conflict-related sexual violence have been facing an increasingly dire situation due to the pandemic. If survivors of sexual violence in conflict can obtain a means of independence, regain their self-confidence, and play an active role economically and socially, we believe that it will bring new perspectives to our society, which in turn creates more opportunities for "Building Back Better."

In light of this, we must not stop providing support even during the pandemic, and gender-based violence, including sexual violence in conflict, must not be tolerated. It is very encouraging that this recognition is now shared by the international community. We will continue to work with the international community to eradicate violence and provide help and support to survivors.

I have heard that the activities that the Fund has conducted up to date will be shared during today's event. I hope that this event will be a fruitful opportunity for many people to recognize the importance of supporting the independence of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

Thank you very much for your attention.