

**Statement by Foreign Minister KAMIKAWA Yoko
at the Women, Peace and Leadership Symposium
(September 20, 2023)**

Distinguish colleagues and friends,

I would like to congratulate the International Peace Institute (IPI), the Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations, and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) for co-hosting the symposium on Innovations in Implementing the WPS agenda.

I participated as a panelist in the Women Peace and Leadership symposium just one year ago together with many friends as well. Inspired by this experience, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State and others who are here today, I established a parliamentary league on WPS to promote the WPS agenda in Japan. Understanding that it was a concept hardly known among Japanese people, I started to promote this agenda intensively and quickly with my fellow diet members. Our initiatives include series of dialogues with countries that have advanced initiatives on WPS. Since then, as a member of the Diet, I have been making proposals to the government while learning about advanced practices in other countries. As a result of our advocacy, WPS was included in our Basic Policies on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2023 which is a basis of Japanese budgetary process. Our advocacy also influenced respective ministries such as Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Justice, Fire and Disaster Management Agency, National Police Agency, and others to work on identifying WPS focal points

for them to be able to interact with their counter-parts abroad.

In order to build on lessons about institutional frameworks that each country has to promote WPS, and to create a suitable one for Japan, we have positioned the Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security as the "International Collaboration Partners" of the WPS parliamentary league, and have been actively working together.

I am very pleased to be back here today as the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

The Government of Japan, led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, is now stepping up efforts in promoting the WPS agenda at the United Nations and in the field of international cooperation. We recognize the significance of WPS which brings issues of women and girls that are traditionally discussed in the social and economic affairs to the international peace and security sphere. Our revised National Action Plan published in April of this year elaborated on those advocacies that we have done and covers all ten Security Council resolutions on WPS. It refers not only to promoting the protection of women and girls in conflict areas, including against Gender-Based Violence, and participation of women in peacebuilding, but also to increasing women's leadership role in natural and man-made disaster prevention and mitigation efforts and decision-making. It further refers to promoting efforts to change the attitude and behavior of men and boys, and to

promoting initiatives that contribute to the WPS agenda in Japan.

In light of the increasing number of natural disasters in many parts of the world, I believe it is extremely important to incorporate the WPS agenda in the areas of disaster response, disaster prevention, and mitigation. Depending on their scale, natural disasters also require international collaboration to respond. I would like to emphasize that it is important to enhance partnership among all actors including Focal Point Network members and civil society to share information and be able to act through such partnership swiftly and effectively and mobilize appropriate resources.

As mentioned in the theme of today's symposium, the key is how to incorporate the WPS agenda into the various high-level discussions taking place at the United Nations, and how to implement the National Action Plans that each country has developed or is developing.

The Government of Japan, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, will continue to promote the WPS discussion as an important agenda for the UN, while also taking over the spirit of the "Presidency Trio for Women Peace and Security" formed under the leadership of Ireland, Mexico, and Kenya.

I further believe that countries need to work even harder to promote the domestic WPS agenda, especially in collaboration with civil society.

From my experience as a diet member, I believe that establishing a parliamentary league, and working on creating a nation-wide structure for WPS are useful strategies.

I regret that I was not able to participate from the beginning of the symposium, but I am glad that today's symposium was a great success. As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, I would also like to continue my efforts to promote the WPS agenda with all of you.

Thank you very much.