

Statement by Ms. ERI Arfiya
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Ministerial Round Table of the 69th Session of the Commission on the Status of
Women
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Thank you, honorable Chair.

This is my first official return to the UN after leaving my position as a UN Officer 3 years ago to run for office in Japan. I felt a strong sense of urgency then, mainly because I wasn't seeing women like myself represented in Japanese delegations to these conferences. As a result of our vibrant democracy, in under three years I now stand before you – 36 and female– as a Head of the Japanese Delegation. The speed at which this actualized speaks volumes to Japan's recent achievements and continued commitment to inclusion and gender equality.

The Government of Japan has been working tirelessly towards the common global goal of achieving gender equality. In 1999, Japan set forth a Basic Plan for Gender Equality, and currently, all sections of the government are in the process of steadily implementing its Fifth Plan. Every year since 2015, Japan has formulated the “Basic Policy on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women” to incorporate the perspectives of women's empowerment and gender equality into economic and fiscal policies. This has contributed to women's economic independence by strengthening the recruitment, development, and appointment of women in Prime Market-listed companies with numerical targets for female executives, as well as by supporting female entrepreneurs and raising women's income. From 2022, Japan made it compulsory for companies over a certain size to disclose information on gender pay gaps, and from fiscal year 2023, on the rate of male employees taking paternity leave.

The private sector and civil society are important catalysts for gender equality and therefore, the Japanese government places importance on working together with various stakeholders. Japan has established the Liaison Conference for the Promotion of Gender Equality, which is made up of more than 100 experts from various fields, including business, academia, women's groups, and other civil society organizations. The Liaison Conference regularly exchanges information and

opinions to reflect a broad spectrum of opinions into policies.

Women, Peace, and Security were put front and center in Japan's foreign policy by former Foreign Minister KAMIKAWA and her legacy is surely inherited by current Foreign Minister IWAYA. To promote the WPS agenda, which marks its 25th anniversary, Japan co-chairs the Focal Points Network and held the Capital Level Meeting in Tokyo in February. The discussions addressed the strengthening of resource allocation for the implementation of action plans. As an example of this, Japan has contributed approximately 2 million US dollars to UN Women to support action plans in the Asia-Pacific region.

Today, I am representing people of Japan, who embody the Japanese spirit of *omoiyari* – kindness and thoughtfulness – and carry an awareness in creating a society that is inclusive and welcoming for all. Please be assured of our continued commitment to realizing gender equality globally, and our unwavering partnership with the international community.

I thank you.