Statement by Mr. Naoto Hisajima
Minister of Japan to the United Nations
on Item 1: Opening of the Session
at the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board of the United
Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of
Women (UN-Women)
28 November 2012

Japan welcomes the steady results which UN Women has achieved under
the strong leadership of Under-Secretary-General/Executive Director to UN
Women Executive Board Michelle Bachelet within two years of the inception of
its activities in the three main pillars of its activities, namely: Normative and
Operations work and Coordination.

We would like to touch upon “the Regional Architecture Review (RAR)”
and “the Evaluation Policy” which Ms. Bachelet has been promoting in order to
improve of efficiency and effectiveness of the organization and is discussed in
this Second Regular Session.

We welcome the RAR, which establishes efficient and effective assistance
implementation frameworks. We also appreciate the fact that throughout the
process of the review, UN Women has provided us with briefings and
consultations in response to requests from Japan and other Member states,
and that due consideration has been given to budgetary issues.

Japan believes that UN Women will finally be able to implement its full
mandate and exercise full-scale impacts after the merge of the four former
organizations. As written in the report, we would like to request continuous
reviews and dialogue with the Executive Board.

We welcome the fact that UN Women has strengthened its evaluation
mechanism, has improved gender evaluation within the UN system, and has
been working for the development of national and regional capacities of
evaluation.
Japan also welcomes the Evaluation Policy which was developed by the organization’s independent Evaluation Office, which directly reports to the Under-Secretary-General. It is imperative that the knowledge and lessons learned through the evaluation process be examined, and we would like to request UN Women to disclose and share the results of its evaluations.

I would also like to mention and express my appreciation for Ms. Bachelet’s recent visit to Japan where we have proverb from an old legend that says “Japan is the land where dawn doesn’t break without a woman”. We are very much grateful that she had the opportunity to meet and exchange views with our political leaders including the Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, and Minister for Gender Issues, as well as leaders of private companies, civil society, the press and youth groups.

As mentioned during her visit, one of UN Women’s this year’s top priorities is ‘the expansion of women’s economic empowerment’ and the utilization of women’s potential is as much a challenge for Japan as it is for other countries. And to this end our Government’s newly established Ministerial Council on Women’s Economic Empowerment developed an Action Plan in July and has been implementing it since then. Furthermore, 168 Japanese companies are signatories to the Women’s Empowerment Principles (WEPs), constituting over one third of all signatories.

Regarding another priority; ‘ending violence against women and girls’, Ms. Bachelet’s visit coincided with ‘Eliminate Violence against Women Week’ in Japan and she participated in the Tokyo Tower lighting ceremony as one of that week’s events. This issue is a challenge that all the countries need to tackle and it will be a main theme of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) next year. We also believe that elimination of such violence is possible and we say “Yes, it is possible!”. In addition to our internal efforts, Japan will continue to support projects such as those in Afghanistan and Africa in this regard.

We will follow up the issues and challenges raised by Ms. Bachelet during her stay. Also, as an active member of the Executive Board, Japan will continue to cooperate and contribute to the activities of UN Women through budgetary assistance and by providing personnel to the organization.