Mr. President,

Japan welcomes this important annual session on the UNHCR here at the Third Committee. We also welcome the strong message presented by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres.

Indeed as High Commissioner Guterres mentioned, the world is witnessing multiple humanitarian crises. Japan is deeply concerned that the number of people forced to evacuate either as refugees or IDPs has grown to its largest in the last twenty years. Japan pays tribute to the staffs of the UNHCR, who have dedicated themselves to working in the field, in spite of these challenging circumstances.

We also greatly appreciate host countries which have accepted large numbers of refugees over a period of many years. With new inflows of refugees, especially the great outpouring of refugees from Syria currently underway, we commend neighboring countries for maintaining an open-border policy and for respecting the principle of non-refoulement.

Mr. President,

Japan is concerned that the crisis in Syria has grown and continues to grow ever more serious; so far the number of refugees that have fled the country surpasses over 2 million, and the humanitarian situation both in Syria and its neighboring countries is worsening. The UNHCR has made the crisis in Syria a top priority, and we appreciate that it is delivering assistance under such extreme circumstances. We also appreciate that High Commissioner Guterres was good enough to accompany Japanese Foreign Minister Kishida on his visit to the Zaatari refugee camp in Jordan, to observe the situation and needs on the ground directly.
Japan will continue to work with the international community to assist refugees and their host countries even more actively. Recently, our Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe, announced at the General Debate of the UN General Assembly in September an additional 60 million USD in humanitarian assistance from Japan for refugees and IDPs in Syria and its neighboring countries ahead of the coming of winter. This comes in addition to our already implemented humanitarian assistance amounting to approximately 95 million USD in for Syria and the surrounding region. Japan also support for the stabilization of neighboring countries. For example, we will provide 120 million USD in yen loans to Jordan.

Mr. President,

Japan appreciates that the UNHCR is taking into consideration the various needs of refugees with an Age, Gender, and Diversity (AGD) approach. In relation to this issue, allow me to quote from Prime Minister Abe address at the General Debate this year:

“Japan intends to make efforts towards measures that will ensure the participation of women at all stages, including the prevention and resolution of conflicts as well as peace-building, and that will also safeguard the rights and the physical well-being of women who are exposed to danger in times of conflict.

I would like to state here that in establishing these three pillars, the Government of Japan will implement ODA in excess of US$3 billion over the next three years, targeting these pillars.”

Japan is looking forward to working with the UNHCR on this issue.

Mr. President,

In dealing with the issues of refugees and IDPs, Japan attaches great importance to human security and peace-building. Human security and peace-building have both been essential pillars of our diplomatic policy, and are included in Foreign Minister Kishida’s priority area of his diplomatic strategy.
Japan welcomes the continuation of the valuable and in-depth dialogues we have had the pleasure of conducting with the UNHCR in this regard. For example, we greatly appreciate High Commissioner Guterres two visits to Japan this year, including one in order to attend the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V). At TICAD V, High Commissioner Guterres made an important contribution to the discussions concerning humanitarian and development assistance in peace-building. It is meaningful that, with the High Commissioner’s contribution, we could reaffirm at TICAD V a direct link between regional peace and security on the one hand and the protection of refugees and IDPs on the other, as well as their indispensability as foundations for African development.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, we look forward to further dialogue with the UNHCR this year on broad range of issues about which we share goals.

Thank you Mr. President.