Statement by H.E. Mr. Hiroshi Minami  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations  
At the 2017 Annual Session of the UNICEF Executive Board  
13 June 2017

Thank you, Mr. President,

To begin, Japan reiterates its appreciation for UNICEF’s tireless efforts and hard work to make the world a better place for children.

Today, violence and conflict are rampant in many parts of the world, and climate change is inexorably pushing those who are already vulnerable beyond their ability to cope and survive. Under these circumstances, UNICEF’s work to protect children and preserve their rights has never been more important than it is today. We reassure that we will stand with UNICEF, as the guardian of Children’s rights, to ensure a hopeful and prosperous future for every child.

<Promotion of the SDGs>
Mr. President,

In September 2015, the world celebrated the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with the determination to leave no one, including no child, behind. Since then, Japan has proactively promoted the implementation of the SDGs both domestically and internationally, and will participate in the Voluntary National Review at the High Level Political Forum in July.

UNICEF’s mandate covers several areas within the SDGs, and so will play a critical role in their achievement. Japan wishes to express our strong expectation that UNICEF will take a leading role to promote the SDGs, and Japan wishes to cooperate with UNICEF in this regard.
Mr. President,

Japan appreciates UNICEF’s great efforts to develop its new Strategic Plan 2018-2021, which incorporates the agency’s strong determination and clear agenda for these next crucial four years. The draft SP is comprehensive, well-balanced and consistent with the SDGs. We also appreciate UNICEF’s clear intention to align the SP with the QCPR, as recommended by many donors. Japan echoes the importance of ‘Delivering as One’ in close collaboration with other UNDS partners, which will enable us to achieve better results for children in a more efficient manner.

We are presently expecting the reports from the Secretary-General mandated by the QCPR resolution. We hope that UNICEF will play a crucial role in the improvement of the UNDS, which should aim for better function and coordination.

Japan also appreciates that the SP incorporates several elements to which we attach great importance, such as the concept of human security and the humanitarian-development nexus. We hope that the SP will also cover other important initiatives, such as the promotion of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which aims to enable every child, especially the most vulnerable ones, to have access to quality health services without suffering financial hardship, and responses to major infectious diseases including not just HIV/AIDS and malaria but also tuberculosis to strengthen health systems for children.

Mr. President,

Japan welcomes UNICEF’s many new initiatives, such as those on Early Childhood Development including its alliance with the World Bank, and its new approaches to enhancing service delivery using new technologies and innovations. As an example, UNICEF organized a public-private seminar on innovation and procurement in Tokyo in April, which was attended by more than 60 companies and individuals. Japan has many leading companies in the field of innovation, and is eager to cooperate in this area.
Finally, with regard to its contributions for 2017, Japan has already disbursed around 19 million US dollars to UNICEF for its core budget, which represents a 10% increase from last year, in addition to the nearly 114 million USD which we have disbursed to its non-core budget, including a 33 million USD contribution to eradicate polio in Nigeria and the Lake Chad region—the pledging event for which was just held in the city of Atlanta on Monday—and 2.5 million USD in emergency assistance for the food and nutrition crisis in the Horn of Africa.

With the current severe situations surrounding children in many parts of the world, Japan considers it important for the international community to make concerted efforts to help children and protect and promote their rights in collaboration with UNICEF. Japan is deeply committed to its close cooperative relationship with UNICEF, and will continue to support its activities both substantively and financially.

I thank you.