Statement by H.E. Yoshifumi Okamura  
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Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations  

At the Second Regular Session of the Executive Board of UN-Women  

15 September 2014  

Mr. President,

I would first like to express my gratitude to Your Excellency, Mr. Gonzalo Koncke Pizzorno of Uruguay, for your strong leadership throughout the year. I am also pleased to welcome the Executive Director of UN-Women, Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, back from Tokyo! We truly appreciate your participation and contribution to the symposium of the World Assembly for Women: WAW! Tokyo 2014.

Mr. President,

Just last weekend, on Friday and Saturday, Japan hosted an international symposium entitled “World Assembly for Women: WAW! Tokyo 2014 - Towards a Society Where Women Shine” especially focusing on the theme of “Women and Economy”, among others, as part of the numerous global campaigns celebrating “Beijing +20” next year.

WAW! issued "WAW! To Do," an outcome document of the discussion among 100 participants, leading figures in the field of gender equality from Japan and the world. I am convinced that "WAW! To DO" will be a constructive contribution to make a society in which women shine in Japan as well as in the world. We will share the document with you all via uploading it to the UN Women Papersmart portal. We would deeply appreciate if Ms. Mlambo-Ngcuka could share with us her impressions and evaluation of that event. We consider this event as only a first step, and we hope that the symposium will be held annually and become a major international forum on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
Mr. President,

UN-Women and Japan have established various cooperative efforts in order to mainstream a gender perspective into humanitarian actions. We worked together on the establishment of a resolution on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Natural Disasters which my country proposed at CSW in 2012 and again this year. Additionally, we are collaboratively advocating for the deeper integration of gender-equality considerations in the consultations and preparations for the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.

Faced with grave humanitarian crisis in and around Syria, the Government of Japan has contributed 3 million US dollars to UN-Women including contributions towards UN-Women’s activities for women’s economic empowerment in countries affected by the crisis in Syria; namely Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, and Egypt. In this connection, we have conducted training for female Syrian refugees in Jordan, secured spaces for women at refugee camps in Iraq, and supported a cash-for-work initiative and awareness-raising programs for Syrian refugees in Lebanon.

Mr. President,

Lastly, I am delighted to share a positive piece of news. At WAW! Tokyo 2014, the opening of UN-Women’s Japan office was announced. We hope that the office will serve as an important venue to deepen the connection between UN-Women and Japan.

I thank you, Mr. President.
WAW! To Do

13th September 2014, Tokyo

The following was summarized by the Chair based on the proposals by WAW! Participants;

1 Promoting Women’s Active Roles in the Economy
(1) Obtain top management’s commitment: Clarify targets, implement action plan, and increase accountability. Endorse Japan’s new legislation that supports women’s empowerment in the workplace. Promote change in the mindset of middle management. Train and support women, and produce female role models.

(2) Implement unprecedented drastic reform in work style: Abandon long working hours, and realize high productive and flexible work style. Shift from “work-life-balance” to “work-life-management” in which one can decide how to blend work and life together based on one’s own will.

(3) Back up women’s entrepreneurship: Lower hurdles on financing such as loans without personal guarantee. During educational stage, young people should be given a chance to be aware of the choice to become entrepreneurs, so that the mindset of people can be changed.

(4) Support women’s business: Actively advance public procurement by women-running corporations. Introduce a social structure to make better use of senior professionals.

(5) Enhance care giving solutions: Promote utilization of home care givers to provide more options to families raising children and caring elderly so that women can work. In this view, cooperate with local governments to establish national standards for home care givers and create a market. Moreover, increase supply, and relax relevant policies and measures to invite foreign care givers in a more flexible manner.

(6) Realize a neutral social system: Review the tax and social security system and realize a neutral social system. Introduce such measures as income tax deductions in order to support child rearing. Moreover, introduce tax incentives for companies that encourage men to take parental leave.

2 Global Issues and Women’s Initiatives
(1) Address immediate needs of women and children: Ensure that comprehensive and effective policies and mechanism are in place in disasters and crisis which threaten human security.

(2) Strategically invest in women’s empowerment: All stakeholders including governments, business circles and civil societies make strategic investment in the areas of education, medicine, economy and food in order to enhance the resilience of societies.
(3) Ensure political leadership and participation of women: To ensure the implementation of UNSCR1325 and related resolutions, high level political leadership and commitment, consultation by the international community with women in civil society, and inclusion of perspectives and participation of women in all stages of peacebuilding and all governmental decision-making are essential. We suggest bringing key high level leaders together to strategize for concrete results.

(4) Strengthen the role of women in peace and security: Document and make accessible the role that women play in peace and security and ensure that resources are available to support such efforts. End the culture of impunity for sexual violence and provide survivor-centered support in peacebuilding, and create mechanisms to ensure the empowerment and support for women.

(5) Reveal and correct biases against women exist in laws, institutions and national policies: Monitor its implementation. The rational analysis of structural impediments of gender equality, including statistical analytics, will allow us to keep the spotlight on the women's challenges.

(6) Empower Women: Technology is critical to the empowerment of women. Technology brings access to education, technical support for small and medium businesses, and offers a means for women across the globe to share best practices. To build women's confidence, we need demonstrated leadership by women not only to provide role models but to encourage and ensure gender equality.

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