Statement by H.E. Mr. Yoshifumi Okamura
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On Agenda Item 108
Report of the Secretary-General on the Work of the Organization
At the 69th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations
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Mr. President,

I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. Sam Kahamba Kutesa on his assumption of duties as the President of the 69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Japan looks forward to his leadership during the current session in dealing with the challenges which the General Assembly is facing. Japan wishes to work together with His Excellency for the success of this 69th session of the General Assembly.

I further would like to convey to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Japan’s deep appreciation for his efforts in guiding the diverse activities of the United Nations and for his latest report on the work of the Organization, No. A/69/1.

Mr. President,

U.N. High-Level Week

During their visit to New York for the High-Level segment of the U.N. General Assembly two weeks ago, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Minister for Foreign Affairs Fumio Kishida collaborated with many world leaders to make progress on the most prevalent challenges facing the world today.

While attending the 2014 U.N. Climate Summit and the High-Level Meeting on Ebola, Prime Minister Abe outlined Japan’s response to each of these pressing issues. To battle climate change, my government will provide adaptive assistance to developing countries, promote technological innovation for energy efficiency, and contribute to the future international framework. In the fight against the Ebola virus, Japan is providing $40 million in new assistance for the West African countries affected by the outbreak, and supports the initiative of the Secretary-General for establishing the U.N. Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER). In this regard, on 3 October, the Government of Japan decided to extend emergency grant aid of $22 million US dollars.

Finally, in his statement to the General Assembly, Prime Minister Abe called upon the organization and its member states to work together to finally resolve a long-standing issue to reform the U.N. in a way that reflects the realities of the 21st century. In this context, Japan seeks to become a permanent member of the Security Council, and take on an appropriate role that this status requires.
Mr. President,

Peace and Security

United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) are the most important tool that the U.N. has for the maintenance of international peace and security. We should also recognize the challenge in front of us, which is how to make U.N. Peacekeeping Operations more sustainable in both financial and human resource aspects. This requires us to take concrete and holistic actions in order to improve this tool.

In this connection, Japan continues to contribute to peacekeeping operations by broadening its involvement under the banner of “Proactive Contribution to Peace,” through commitments announced by Prime Minister Abe at the Peacekeeping Summit held in September. Japan also supports the strategic review initiated by the Secretary-General, and will proactively contribute to peacekeeping-related issues during this session through active participation in the coming discussion in C34 and Fifth Committee.

Regarding the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Japan has been on the PBC since its establishment in 2005. Since 2011, Japan has assumed the chairmanship of the PBC’s Working Group on Lessons Learned. This year the Working Group held a series of meetings on the challenges of UN missions’ drawdown or withdrawal. We will conclude this exercise with a report by the Chair to be issued by the end of the year. We hope that this report will benefit the 2015 Review of the UN Peacebuilding Architecture by offering a useful perspective on the role to be played by the PBC in the context of UN missions’ transition.

Mr. President,

Post-2015 Development Agenda

We are now facing the monumental and historic task of formulating and adopting the post-2015 Development Agenda next year. I believe that inclusiveness, sustainability, and resilience will be important elements of the agenda. I would also like to point out that next March Japan will host the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) in Sendai. We believe that this conference will be an occasion to discuss humanitarian issues and disaster prevention in an integrated manner, and will contribute to international cooperation in disaster risk reduction, as well as to the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President,

African Development

The TICAD process has been running since 1993, through close cooperation between Japan, UNOSAA, AUC, UNDP and the World Bank. Africa and Japan have shared both the concept and practice of development, rooted in the idea of ownership and partnership, for over 20 years. To continue building on this foundation, Japan will mobilize up to $32 billion between 2013 and 2017, in both public and private sectors, as announced at the Fifth TICAD Conference in Yokohama, Japan last year. Japan is determined to further enhance our efforts through the TICAD process to promote transformative, resilient and inclusive growth across Africa.
Mr. President,

Nuclear Disarmament

Today, there are still more than 16,000 nuclear weapons in the world. Japan believes that efforts to address the issues of non-proliferation should be rooted in a clear understanding of the humanitarian impact of the use of nuclear weapons, and in an objective assessment of the state of the international system, which is facing increasingly diverse nuclear risks. Japan is determined to continue making steady progress in global nuclear disarmament, by helping to reduce the number of nuclear weapons, the role they play, and the incentive to possess them, as well as by preventing the emergence of new nuclear states, the proliferation of nuclear-weapons-related materials and technologies, and nuclear terrorism.

Mr. President,

Human Rights

Japan is promoting the agenda of “a society in which women shine,” as Prime Minister Abe reiterated last month at the General Assembly. The United Nations and its member states need to act together toward the promotion of the rights of various vulnerable people. Japan’s ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January of this year is one recent example of Japan’s commitment to the advancement of human rights.

Japan welcomes the Human Rights Council’s vigorous works including the report produced by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK. Japan, together with the EU, is going to sponsor another resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK at this UN General Assembly as well.

Mr. President,

Budget

Regarding Administrative and Budgetary issues, the main session is scheduled to consider both the First Performance report of the 2014-2015 budget and the 2016-2017 budget outline. From the perspective of applying budgetary discipline, my delegation will carefully analyze and judge all potential additional requirements for the current budget, and requests the Secretariat to consider the next biennium budget, not on the basis of just extending the 2014-2015 budget, but on the basis of a fresh look at the needs of the Organization. Japan expresses its appreciation for the Secretary-General’s continued and strong commitment to a better management of the Secretariat and the UN facilities.

Mr. President,

I will close my statement today with a reminder that 2015 marks the 70-year anniversary of the founding of these United Nations. Japan will continue to work closely with the Secretary-General to ensure a more effective, efficient United Nations, and hopes that the U.N. and its member states will do the same while invoking a future-forward outlook to tackle the most pressing challenges of our day.

Thank you.