Mr. President,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to H.E. Ambassador Harald Braun of Germany and his distinguished colleagues for proficiently guiding the consultations on the resolution on Afghanistan. I would also like to thank H.E. Ambassador Zahir Tanin of Afghanistan for his constructive engagement towards achieving consensus.

As co-sponsor of the document, Japan is pleased to offer its support for the resolution at hand. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and in particular, its former Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for Afghanistan, Mr. Ján Kubiš, who has ably led the mission during his tenure.

I would like to extend my congratulations to the appointment of Mr. Nicholas Haysom as the new SRSG and Ambassador Tadamichi Yamamoto as the new Deputy-SRSG. Under the new leadership, I expect that UNAMA will continue to play a central role in supporting an Afghan-led political process and socio-economic development.

1. Challenges facing the new administration

Mr. President,

Japan welcomes the induction of Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai as the new President of Afghanistan and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as the new Chief Executive Officer on 29 September 2014.
Afghanistan stands at a very critical juncture. As the country embarks on the “Transformation Decade” towards achieving peace and stability supported by sustainable finances and a viable economy, the new government must tackle numerous challenges. In this regard, I would like to touch upon three points of particular importance: namely, (1) advancing the political process, (2) improving public order and safety, and finally (3) continuing efforts to achieve sustainable development.

(1) The political process

Mr. President,

My first point concerns the political process. Japan congratulates Afghanistan on their first democratic transition of power. The electoral process was a testament to the political will and courage of millions of Afghan men and women. We are pleased to have supported the process through, amongst others, the provision of polling materials and capacity building for the Independent Election Commission.

Nevertheless, we note with disappointment the numerous delays that the presidential electoral process had experienced. Furthermore, it is regrettable that after more than 50 days since the inauguration of the president, key government posts have yet to be appointed.

We call on the new leadership to form an inclusive cabinet without delay and respond to calls of the Afghan people to advance the political process. We look to the new government to carry out its commitments on anti-corruption, anti-narcotics, as well as political reform. We also hope to see advancement in the political reconciliation process with the Taliban. Moreover, in anticipation of future elections such as the Wolasi Jirga (lower house) in 2015, lessons from past elections must be utilized to reinforce the democratic process and make it more transparent.

(2) Public Order and Safety

Mr. President,
Secondly, I would like to address the issue of public order and safety. The conclusion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission at the end of 2014 will mark a watershed in Afghanistan’s path towards self-sufficiency. In this regard, we welcome Afghanistan’s recent signing of the Bilateral Security Agreement (BSA) with the United States and the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with NATO. We also highly commend the courageous efforts of ISAF in providing security assistance to Afghanistan since its inception in 2001. Furthermore, we welcome that the NATO-Resolute Support Mission (RSM) will continue to provide assistance for Afghan security forces and institutions beyond 2014.

Public order and safety constitute the foundations for Afghanistan’s development process and the international community’s engagement in it. In order to prevent the country from ever becoming a seedbed for terrorism again, it is imperative that the international community continues its engagement with Afghanistan.

In this regard, Japan has provided more than one billion dollars to the UNDP Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA). For example, this month, Japan is providing financial and technical assistance for the training of approximately 200 female Afghan police officers in Turkey. We expect our contribution to the fund to be utilized with appropriate oversight, in strengthening Afghan law enforcement capabilities.

(3) Sustainable Development

Mr. President,

The third point concerns the achievement of sustainable development. At the Tokyo Conference of 2012, Afghanistan and the international community established the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF), which reaffirmed their partnership for economic growth and development through a process of mutual accountability. At the London Conference on Afghanistan (LCA) to be held next month as a follow-up to the Tokyo Conference, we look for Afghanistan to renew their commitments on governance and development. Correspondingly, we look forward to the international community to manifest its continued support for Afghanistan.
Japan is the second largest aid donor to Afghanistan. It has contributed approximately 5.4 billion dollars since 2001 and has already disbursed over 2 billion dollars of the 3 billion dollar commitment made at the 2012 Tokyo Conference. But this is also a commitment based on mutual responsibility. With the understanding that the new Afghan government will deliver on its commitments, Japan will continue to carry out the aid commitments it made at the Tokyo Conference.

2. Concluding remarks

Mr. President,

Japan’s assistance to Afghanistan is a testament to our support for the people of Afghanistan on their path towards achieving sustainable development. As Afghanistan makes the crucial transition toward self-reliance, peace and prosperity, Japan stands ready to offer its support in cooperation with the international community.

I thank you, Mr. President.

END