Statement by Mr. Hiroshi Minami
Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

At the Joint Debate of the General Assembly, Sixty-ninth Session

On Agenda Item 69: Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance.

11 December 2014

Mr. President,

The international community is facing serious, unprecedented crises, and the UN humanitarian mechanisms are woefully overstretched. We are facing four Level 3 crises, in South Sudan, Central African Republic, Syria, and Iraq. In addition to these emergencies, the system has to make every effort to confront continuous disruptive outbreaks of humanitarian crises, such as the Ebola epidemic.

Japan has resolved to continue to take on the great responsibility of these issues alongside the international community. In order to prevent extremism from taking root in the Middle East region while also responding swiftly to the region's humanitarian crises, Japan is implementing 50 million US dollars of emergency assistance for the region right away, as promised by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in his statement before the General Assembly this past September. As a response to the Ebola outbreak,
Prime Minister Abe also announced 40 million US dollars of additional assistance during the General Assembly. Furthermore, on November 7th, we have pledged to provide further assistance amounting up to 100 million US dollars.

Mr. President,

Nevertheless, needs are so immense that financial contributions from traditional donors alone are simply not enough. With this reality in mind, some suggest the possibility of creating a “super-CERF” for Level 3 emergencies; a pooled fund based on assessed contributions, which is similar to what we have for peacekeeping missions. However, creating new assessed contributions requires further discussion among humanitarian actors, and it is not a tool that could be used immediately for the crises we are facing right now.

Therefore, it is crucially important to discuss not only how we finance humanitarian needs, but also how we can better address such needs. We strongly feel that close coordination among various actors, including local governments, donor countries, international organizations, and NGOs, is of essential importance.

In this context, my Government strongly welcomes the resolutions which we will adopt today. I would also like to stress the importance of the coordination mechanism led by OCHA. I would like to commend Ms. Valerie Amos, the longest serving Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, for her prominent leadership in coordinating emergency humanitarian assistance among the humanitarian agencies.

Mr. President,

The “World Humanitarian Summit,” which will be held in 2016 in Istanbul, is a great chance for humanitarian actors to gather and discuss
various challenges in the field of humanitarian assistance. We welcome the readiness of Turkey to host this Summit in 2016.

Japan hosted a regional consultation process for North and East Asia this past July in Tokyo. The participants at the consultation discussed various issues regarding the humanitarian system. Based on this discussion, we will actively participate in the thematic discussion in the process of preparation for this Summit. In this regard, we would like to draw attention to the gender perspective as a cross cutting issue.

We will host the UN Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Sendai, Japan, in March 2015. Through this Conference, we will be happy to share best practices and lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011, including Build Back Better concept. We would like to share the outcome of the Conference with the “World Humanitarian Summit” process.

Many high-level UN conferences are scheduled in the year 2015. These include the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in July, the summit in September to adopt the post 2015 development agenda, and the 21st session of the Conference of the Parties to the UNFCCC in December, to name but a few. We have to be aware that, although these conferences are of monumental importance, the process of preparation for the “World Humanitarian Summit” should go on firmly throughout the year 2015 irrespective of these conferences.

Mr. President,

In concluding my statement, I sincerely commend the work of humanitarian organizations in helping realize more effective assistance methods, as well as the tireless efforts of aid workers on the ground, despite the world’s numerous humanitarian crises.

Thank you.