Statement by Ms. Yaeko Sumi  
Alternate Representative of Japan  
On Items 65(a) and (b) Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Children  
Third Committee  
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Mr. Chair,

I believe that it is the responsibility of international society as a whole to ensure that children with a future can live a life without fear of conflict or violence. As an alternate representative I pay my sincerest respects, on behalf of Japan, to those UN agencies carrying out this responsibility by engaging in a variety of efforts.

However, as it stands now, many children still face the harsh conditions of poverty, social inequality, disease, conflict, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking. Moreover, we have to keep in mind that escalation of food prices due to climate change as well as wide-spread unemployment due to the recent economic crisis reinforces these conditions. There is no doubt that the protection of the rights of children is still one of the most important issues that the world must address. Nevertheless, in order to make the various programs, schemes, and resolutions more effective, which international society has been constructing for years, efforts of the signatory countries at both the domestic and international levels is crucial.

Mr. Chair,

Japan has implemented concrete measures for the protection and promotion of the rights of children.

In order to address various threats which children face, Japan has worked vigorously toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and implemented financial commitments in areas of education and health which we have announced. We have also actively participated in the discussion of the post-2015 development agenda. In this regard, Japan believes that human security, which focuses on different needs of each and every individual, as well as its protection and capacity-building, is suitable as a guiding principle for the post-MDGs, and a particularly indispensable area in which this principle must be embodied is health. In order to respond to various health needs including marginalized people such as children, and secure everyone’s access to basic health care services, that is, the
realization of the universal health coverage (UHC), Japan developed a ‘strategy for global health diplomacy’ in May this year.

Regarding the issue of child pornography, the damage caused by this grave violation of children is growing in spite of the many efforts that have been made so far, and the number of victims in Japan is increasing. In recent years, most incidents are related to the internet, which is a matter of serious concern. In May 2013, the Government of Japan developed the ‘Second Comprehensive Measures to Eliminate Child Pornography’ as a comprehensive provision for eliminating child pornography. Several relevant ministries in Japan are promoting this provision by facilitating methods to block both distributing and searching for child pornography on the internet, as well as to thoroughly freeze pernicious cases of child pornography. We are also aspiring to strengthen cooperation with foreign investigation authorities through this provision.

Mr. Chair,

Facing an increase in the number of divorces among multi-national married couples, as well as illegal child abduction and illegal unilateral parental custody, and taking the perspective that the interests of children must be considered as the most important, Japan established legislation towards concluding the Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction in June this year. At present, we are working on amending our domestic legal structure in this regard.

Child abuse and corporal punishment are important social issues in Japan. Japan is one of the co-sponsors of the ‘rights of the child’ resolution adopted by consensus in the third committee of the General Assembly last year, which called for the elimination of violence against children. While corporal punishment in schools and child abuse in the family is clearly prohibited by law, we disseminate information concerning child abuse and corporal punishment through the publication of informative materials and the training of teachers, so that such laws can be more effective.

Mr. Chair,

It is the child who builds the future. If children have no hope, they can never build a sound future. With the recognition that children living in a harsh conditions exist in all countries in the world, Japan continues to cooperate with a member states, international society, and civil society.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.