Statement by H.E. Mr. Jun Yamazaki
Ambassador, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Second Regular Session of the Executive Board of UNICEF
Special focus session on the work of UNICEF for children with disabilities
3 September 2013

Mr. President,

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Executive Director, Mr. Anthony Lake, for holding today’s special focus session on the work of UNICEF for children with disabilities, which is a topic of great interest among the Member States. I would also like to thank Ms. Rosangela Berman Bieler for her comprehensive presentation, and Mr. Yannis Vardakastanis from the International Disability Alliance for his important message.

With a view towards enhancing inclusiveness and equity, Japan supports UNICEF’s policy to consider children with disabilities to be a central development agenda item. This policy has also been included in the current draft strategic plan 2014-2017. The next step is expected to be the elaboration of the Disability Action Plan, and we expect UNICEF to fully consult with the Member States in this process.

Japan has been working towards the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and has nearly completed the process of amending our relevant domestic laws and formulating new acts. We also hope to make significant inputs to the High-Level Meeting on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals and Other Internationally Agreed Development Goals for Persons with Disabilities, which will be held on 23 September 2013.

At the High-level Plenary Meeting of the 65th Session of the UN General Assembly on the MDGs in September 2010, my country committed to contributing USD 5 billion over five years starting from 2011 to address issues of global health. We are steadily realizing this commitment. There are less than 900 days until the deadline for the accomplishment of the MDGs, and a Special Event towards achieving the MDGs will be organized by the President of General Assembly on 25 September. On this occasion, that is on the same day, Japan has also offered to hold a side event titled Post-2015: Health and Development with relevant Member States and organizations, including UNICEF. Japan will continue to
actively engage in efforts to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the MDGs and to formulate the post-2015 development agenda, through ever closer relationship with UNICEF and other relevant organizations.

Mr. President,

With regard to the post-2015 development agenda, the Report of the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and the report by the Secretary-General (A/68/202) have been issued, and discussions on the agenda will now begin on a full scale. Japan has been actively contributing to the discussions through such efforts as organizing the post-2015 development agenda contact group since 2011. We hope to utilize the various valuable lessons and knowledge gained from this process in formulating the post-2015 development agenda.

Japan attaches great importance to the area of health as a global issue directly linked to human security. We expect projects related to health as well as to human security, in the wider context, will be implemented steadily by UNICEF and other UN agencies, in accordance with the common understanding on human security outlined in the General Assembly resolution 66/290, which was adopted by consensus last year. Given the fact that the children are the most vulnerable to disasters and likely to be left behind, disaster risk reduction is also an essential issue to realize human security.

With regard to UNICEF’s draft Strategic Plan 2014-2017, Japan values Executive Director Lake’s leadership in setting up a series of dialogues with Member States starting from the initial review of the current strategic plan, which led to the final draft.

The final draft presents various measures for achieving UNICEF’s goals, such as Monitoring Results for Equity Results (MoRES). It also stresses the necessity of ‘resilience’ in order to achieve sustainable development. Furthermore, reflecting the results of the quadrennial comprehensive policy review (QPCR), it sets out UNICEF’s stance to improve efficiency and effectiveness and to strengthen coordination with the wider UN system. We are also pleased to see ‘human security’, ‘universal health coverage’ and ‘disaster risk reduction’ –three issues on which Japan places strong emphasis– being clearly mentioned in the Plan.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the Government of Japan supports the adoption of the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2014-2017.

Mr. President,

I wish to conclude my statement by expressing my Government’s expectation that UNICEF will attach high value to efficient and effective implementation of its activities with
even sharper focus, while of course recognizing the importance of inclusiveness and equity. We look forward to seeing the results of such efforts.

Thank you Mr. President.