Statement by H.E. Yoshifumi Okamura
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Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations

At the First Regular Session of the Executive Board of UN-Women

9 February 2015

Mr. President,

I would like to first commend His Excellency, Mr. Gonzalo Koncke Pizzorno of Uruguay, for his dedicated work as the out-going President of the Executive Board. I would also like to congratulate Your Excellency, Mr. Ib Petersen of Denmark, on your assumption of the Presidency of the Board. I assure you that Japan, as a member of the Board since the inception of UN-Women, will continue to support you, and contribute positively to the work of this Board.

I also welcome the excellent statement just made by Executive Director Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.

1. Structured dialogues on financing the UN Women Strategic Plan 2014-2017

Mr. President,


In this connection, I have good news today. I am proud to inform you that last week the Parliament of Japan approved our Government’s proposal to fund UN-Women’s non-core projects in the Middle East and Africa in the amount of over 14.5 million USD. Together with our contributions to UN-Women’s core budget (pending the final approval of the Parliament), our total contributions to UN-Women this year will reach nearly 20 million USD. This represents a significant jump in our contribution. It is a twofold increase in comparison with last year, and a tenfold increase in comparison with 2 years ago.

At the same time, however, we remain well aware that the resources that we, the Member States altogether, have afforded UN-Women remain woefully inadequate. We should recall the general consensus when we first established UN-Women that the mandate we gave it, and therefore the expectations we placed upon it, came with a minimum budget of $500 million. Yet here we are, four years later, asking UN-Women to function on less than two-thirds of that minimum. Japan is committed to supporting the work of UN-Women, and hopes that others will also step up to ensure that it has the backing necessary to achieve its mandate.
2. Evaluation

As Japan increases its contributions to UN-Women, we place greater importance on the improvement and proper implementation of the organization’s work. As an expression of our interest, a senior Japanese official from Tokyo, with the cooperation of UN-Women, recently made a trip to the DRC and South Sudan to observe the activities of UN-Women on the ground.

In this regard, we appreciate that UN-Women recognizes that evaluation is central to its mission and that it accepts all the recommendations in the report of the Global Evaluation Advisory Committee (GEAC). We will keep a close eye on the implementation of these recommendations by UN-Women.

3. The work of UN-Women with men and boys and the “HeForShe” campaign

We are very much looking forward to the briefing today on UN-Women’s work with men and boys and the “HeForShe” campaign. As you know, our Prime Minister, Mr. Shinzo Abe is a “HeForShe” long before this campaign started, and has been taking the lead on many fronts in the fight to achieve gender equality.

In this connection, I am glad to inform you that Prime Minister Abe will once again take the initiative to hold the second symposium of the “World Assembly for Women: WAW! Tokyo 2015” in August. We are now considering how to increase the engagement and participation of men in the symposium this year.

We also once again expect the Executive Director’s participation and contribution to the symposium.

Mr. President,

Japan, in cooperation with the UN-Women Tokyo Office, which will start its operation in two months with an opening ceremony to take place this summer, will continue to actively cooperate and contribute to the activities of UN-Women through budgetary assistance and by providing personnel to the organization.

I thank you, Mr. President.