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*Provisional***Statement by the Representative of Japan, Mr. Hoshino:**

I would like to begin by joining others in thanking the briefers for their important insights. I will abridge my remarks today in the light of the time constraints, and would therefore like to ask participants to refer to the website to see Japan's full statement.

Japan is seriously concerned about the fact that sexual violence continues to be used as a tactic of war, and we condemn such acts in the strongest terms. We must put an end to sexual violence. In preventing and deterring sexual violence, we should reflect on its root causes, such as discrimination against women and gender inequality. It is crucial that we support the efforts of the United Nations and its States Members to obtain political commitments from the parties to conflicts to addressing these causes, and to ensure that those commitments are implemented. In that regard, Japan commends the important collaboration both on joint communiqués and national action plans between the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and relevant countries.

Economic and political empowerment is one surefire way to prevent and deter sexual violence. Women cannot be seen merely as victims of conflict; they are active peacebuilders and safeguards against violent extremism. Empowering women enhances the resilience of families, communities, regions and beyond. Japan believes that the most effective contribution that donors can make is to women's empowerment. With that in mind, through UN-Women, we recently decided to provide additional financial assistance of around \$18 million for women's empowerment and leadership programmes where they are needed most.

Last year we witnessed various instances of the liberation of territories from armed groups, and the release or escape of women and girls who had been held by such groups, which shed light on the cruel realities that affect women and girls in conflicts and the growing and urgent need to ensure accountability for the perpetrators of such acts and justice for their survivors. Putting an end to a conflict does not necessarily mean putting an end of sexual violence. If the perpetrators are free or remain in power, the stigma will never end, and that can lead to distrust of Government. Where there is impunity, people may seek their own retribution, which in turn can easily result in relapses into conflict. In order to address the complex issues related to accountability, we must work to ensure the establishment of a rule of law and justice system that is responsive to gender in conflict and post-conflict settings.

Since 2014, Japan has been financially supporting the work of the Team of Experts in the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, which is being effectively deployed in some of the world's most challenging contexts and is delivering practical results. For example, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is a priority country for Japan and the Team of Experts. As the country's current situation is a difficult one, we have set up seven specialized units on sexual violence. They provide training, mentoring, infrastructure and technical support for judicial investigations and mobile courts and have brought qualitative and quantitative improvements in the judicial response to sexual violence. Between 1 January and 31 October 2017, these units registered 1,726 cases of sexual and gender-based violence that have so far resulted in 643 judgments and represent the first-ever concrete data on accountability for sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In conclusion, we need concrete interventions with concrete results, based on the concept of human security. It is never too late for justice and accountability. However, the sooner they come, the sooner the healing can start and the sooner a sense of dignity can be restored to survivors. Japan calls on the international community to unite and take concrete actions as steadily and as quickly as possible. Japan will always be a part of that effort.