

Mr. Kono (Japan): It is a great pleasure for me to be here in the Security Council today to discuss the challenges facing United Nations peacekeeping and its reform. I would like to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Hailemariam Desalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, for his initiative in hosting today's meeting, and to His Excellency Secretary-General António Guterres for his leadership of United Nations peacekeeping reform.

Peacekeeping is a noble and lofty effort and one that the United Nations has led for decades in order to maintain international peace and security. Under the banner of contributing proactively to that goal, Japan has made every effort to achieve peace and stability in the international community, and United Nations peacekeeping has unquestionably been an indispensable part of our efforts. In 2015, we enacted a series of laws on peace and security to enable our country to further contribute to the diverse activities of United Nations peacekeeping. This year also marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of our International Peace Cooperation Act. During the past quarter century, Japan has dispatched more than 12,500 personnel to 27 missions, including in Cambodia, the Golan Heights, Timor-Leste and Haiti. Most recently, in the longest deployment period to date for Japanese peacekeepers, we sent engineering units to the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) for five years. They repaired approximately 260 kilometres of roads and developed 500,000 square metres of land. Japan will continue to dispatch staff officers to UNMISS headquarters and contribute to establishing peace and stability in South Sudan.

With regard to today's topic of United Nations peacekeeping reform, Japan fully supports implementing and following up on reform efforts with the aim of making United Nations peacekeeping more effective and efficient. Resolution 2378 (2017), which we adopted today, will be a powerful engine for advancing our reform efforts, and one that Japan strongly supports and will work to implement. Among the many areas requiring reform, I would like to emphasize the importance of training and building the capacity of United Nations peacekeepers. Well-trained and skilled peacekeepers are essential to ensuring effective and efficient peacekeeping operations, and we need to fill the gap between the demands on the ground and peacekeepers' current capabilities and equipment. Japan has been a strong United Nations partner in developing the United Nations Project for African Rapid Deployment of Engineering Capabilities, which has been conducted in Kenya since 2015. Under that partnership, some 80 Japanese Self-Defence Forces personnel have been dispatched as instructors to train 130 engineering service members from five East African countries.

Since more than half of United Nations peacekeeping missions are deployed in Africa, we believe that cooperation between them and African Union peace support operations is critical. Japan will continue to promote human resources development for social stability in Africa, which is one of the priority areas of the Nairobi Declaration of the sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development. In partnership with the United Nations and major troop contributing countries of Asia and Africa, Japan will further enhance capacity-building in the countries of the Indo-Pacific region. I would also like to stress that it is important for the United Nations and its Member States to coordinate their capacity-building activities in a coherent manner. At a

meeting that Japan hosted last month, in which officials from more than 30 countries participated, the need for such coherence in coordination was widely recognized.

The Secretary-General's report on a mechanism to fill the gap between force generation and capabilities will be submitted to the Security Council within 90 days of today's adoption of resolution 2378 (2017). I hope its recommendations will be based on best practices, including the Project for African Rapid Deployment of Engineering Capabilities. We are committed to further discussion, based on that report.

I would also like to emphasize the importance of the role of women in peacekeeping and of the development of human resources among the young people who represent our future. It is women and children who are most affected and hurt by conflict, and female peacekeepers can provide them with the appropriate support and address their specific needs. Women are indispensable to peacekeeping, and Japan will host an outreach seminar next month in Tokyo to promote efforts to appoint more senior women to mission leadership positions. We also aim to expand the number of civilians contributing to peacekeeping by enhancing training for young people.

Japan will continue to contribute proactively to peacekeeping activities, and as a member of the Security Council, we will take an active part in the discussions of United Nations peacekeeping reform and coordinate closely with other member States, as well as the United Nations as a whole, with the aim of achieving more effective, efficient and agile United Nations peacekeeping operations.