

Security Council Open Debate on Sexual Violence in Council, April 17th 2013, Security Council Chamber

Statement by Mr. Umemoto, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations.

First of all, Japan welcomes the Secretary-General's recent report (S/2013/149). We reiterate our full support for the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, and for her priorities of fostering political leadership and action and deepening national ownership, leadership and responsibility. We welcome the work of the Team of Experts and strongly support their efforts, especially those aimed at strengthening the capacity of national rule-of-law and justice institutions. We would also like to underline the important role played by United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, the network of 13 United Nations entities, including UN-Women, chaired by Special Representative Bangura. Greater coordination is vital to improving global efforts to meet this challenge.

I would like to touch on Japan's primary policy. Conflict-related sexual violence should be tackled by the international community as a whole. Japan places great emphasis on this issue. As our Foreign Minister stated in a recent speech on foreign policy, Japan will continue to address this issue, and will participate actively in international initiatives on human rights issues, including the protection of women's rights. Last month, Japan announced a new contribution of \$4.5 million for programmes aimed at preventing sexual violence and supporting victims in countries such as Libya, Somalia, the Central African Republic and Mali.

Japan condemns attacks on women's human rights defenders and emphasizes that Member States should take steps to ensure the protection of such defenders. We also recognize the importance of multisectoral services for victims of sexual violence. In that regard, our recent contribution addresses various needs of victims, including, for example, the establishment of relief and recovery systems for legal support and mental-health care in camps for refugees and internally displaced persons.

Japan strongly supports the idea of shifting the stigma attached to crimes of sexual violence off the victims and onto the perpetrators. We also support efforts to comprehensively address cultures of impunity. In that regard, Japan has, for instance, been supporting Afghanistan's Ministry of Women's Affairs in implementing its law on the elimination of violence against women.

As was pointed out in the Secretary-General's report, addressing sexual violence in the context of security sector reform processes is of key importance. Over the past five years, Japan has provided \$900 million to help support the Afghanistan National Police, part of which has been used for employing and training female police officers. So far, more than 1,400 female police officers have been hired. And in Africa, for example, Japan has been supporting capacity-building and training for Somalia's security officers in the areas of sexual and gender-based violence and the abuse and exploitation of children.

Before concluding, I am very pleased to announce that Japan has begun to develop a national action plan based on resolution 1325 (2000). We are hard at work on the plan, which includes our commitment to further strengthening our efforts to help protect women's rights in humanitarian settings. We are in close consultation with United Nations organizations such as UN-Women, and hope to complete the plan as soon as possible.