



JAPAN

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Press Release

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**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Shinichi Kitaoka
At the Open Debate on: Women and Peace and Security
Security Council
October 27, 2005**

Mr. President,

I wish to begin by expressing my delegation's gratitude to the Romanian presidency for organizing this open debate. I would also like to thank the speakers for their insightful presentations and first-hand information.

Mr. President,

Japan believes that it is important to ensure women's participation in all efforts to maintain peace and security, from peacemaking to peacekeeping to peacebuilding. In this regard, we welcome the outcome document of the 2005 World Summit, which rightly underlined this point and reaffirmed our commitment to the full and effective implementation of resolution 1325. We also welcome the decision to establish the Peacebuilding Commission and look forward to the Commission's contribution in this area.

Women are concerned about the way that the peacemaking process is currently conducted; while women often organize at the grassroots level in order to promote peace, their access to the formal process continues to be limited. Why? One of the reasons, we believe, is that the actors concerned have not yet gained enough understanding about the advantages of having women involved in peace negotiations and the concrete results that such involvement can produce. With women's participation at the negotiation table, we will be able to integrate women's needs and perspectives into peace agreement and settlement. This way, we can ensure the central role of women in the subsequent peacekeeping and peacebuilding processes and in post-conflict society.

In the peace process in Burundi, more than 50 women organized and presented recommendations to peace negotiators. Twenty-three of these recommendations were included in the final peace accord which incorporated a strong recognition of the centrality of women's rights and opportunities for engaging in the area of advancing democracy, governance, peace and security, and reconstruction. In Afghanistan, 95 women were among the 502 delegates who participated in the constitutional Loya Jirga, undoubtedly contributing to the inclusion of the clause to guarantee equal rights and duties for men and women before the law in the country's first post-Taliban constitution. Citing these best practices and lessons learned, we must continue to advocate effectively for recognition of the importance of women's roles in all efforts towards achieving peace and security and intensify our endeavors to gain understanding and raise awareness on this critical issue.

Mr. President,

For successful peacebuilding, including an initial phase of development and reconstruction, self-help efforts and ownership by the local population are indispensable. In order to foster such self-help efforts and local ownership and ensure women's participation in the process, women need to be protected and empowered. Protection and empowerment are the central components of human security.

At this juncture, let me introduce one brief example of what Japan is doing on the ground based on this concept. In the Philippines, Japan is assisting, through the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, community development programs and regional infrastructure projects by providing 2.5 billion yen in loans (approximately \$21 million). In these projects, community groups drawn from the local population take the lead in developing and implementing different aspects of the programs. What is unique about these projects is that widows who lost their husbands to conflict are given priority with regard to participation in these community groups. We believe that these projects will help women to gain confidence and be empowered to assume roles as major contributors to development and reconstruction, and thus ultimately, to lasting peace.

Finally, Mr. President,

Japan agrees with the point made in last year's presidential statement, comprehensive, coordinated and system-wide efforts are indispensable to full

implementation of resolution 1325. It therefore welcomes the Secretary-General's system-wide action plan on implementation of that resolution, which was just presented by Ms. Mayanja. We will study the plan in greater detail in due course, but today I would like to make two preliminary comments.

First, one of the major causes of the sexual misconduct involving peacekeeping personnel is considered to be the lack of training and education of soldiers by troop contributing countries. It is my delegation's view that this perspective should also be taken into account in the formulation of the action plan.

And second, we welcome the assignment of gender advisers in peacekeeping operations and the expansion of their responsibilities and we believe that it is necessary to evaluate how well they have carried out their duties and whether the peacekeeping structure, including those at the higher levels, pay enough attention to these advisers and their work. Furthermore, in assigning gender advisers, we should ensure the effectiveness of their efforts by avoiding duplication with work done in other similar schemes, for example, by child protection advisers.

Mr. President, I thank you.