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**Statement by Ambassador Yukio Takasu  
Permanent Representative of Japan  
Open Debate of the Security Council on Women and Peace and Security  
29 October 2008**

Mr. President,

I would like to express my appreciation to the Chinese delegation for organizing this important debate on women, peace and security. I would also like to thank the guest speakers for sharing their experiences.

Women can and should play a more important role in the process of conflict prevention, peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding. Women are major stakeholders in each of these stages. Women together with children are most vulnerable and often severely affected in conflict and instability. The different perspectives from those of men and their special needs must be better reflected in the efforts to achieve a durable peace and reconciliation and to rebuild society.

The Security Council has repeatedly stressed the importance of women's equal and full participation in the efforts to promote peace since the adoption of SCR 1325. Yet women have been often excluded from the peace process due to a lack of political will on the part of society and traditional stereotypes of gender roles. All too common gender-based violence and discrimination against women and girls in the course of conflict hinder their formal representation in peace talks and rebuilding of society. The challenge, therefore, is, how do we utilize the political framework based on the principles of SCR 1325 for achieving tangible progress in women's lives on the ground?

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/622) provides us with an overview of the progress and good practices as well as the challenges.

First of all, we welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1820 this June as one of the cosponsors. The resolution recognized sexual violence as a security problem and called on the international community to take concrete action to tackle the widespread sexual violence against women in situations of armed conflict. Ending impunity and providing survivors with the necessary legal protection and remedies will promote the implementation of SCR 1325. We hope the Secretary-General's campaign to end violence against women and

the inter-agency action against sexual violence in conflict will strengthen actions by the UN system.

Second, we are pleased that women are now more represented in peacekeeping operations with full-time gender advisors and focal points. This facilitates the integration of a gender perspective in national institutions and governance; the participation of local women and girls in national decision-making processes and elections; the improved reporting of violence against women; and access to services such as medical and psychological care by victims. We hope the Secretary-General to make further efforts to appoint more women as SRSG and Special Envoys. Ensuring gender-awareness training for peacekeepers is important to make a zero-tolerance policy effective.

Mr. President,

Although we are encouraged with some positive developments, we cannot fail to see that much remains to be done.

To address effectively the needs of women and girls who have been under the pressure of conflict, we have to adopt a comprehensive approach to the problem. More effective actions must be taken to protect them from threats to safety. But equally stronger measures to empower them are essential to address their needs. Security and judicial sector reform and the rule of law are important. But they should be accompanied by basic social and economic services such as education, vocational training, microcredit and access to land and property rights to strengthen the economic capacity of women. What is needed is the human security approach that Japan has been promoting over the years, the essence of which is to both protect people's lives and dignity from serious threats and empower them to realize their full potential.

Women should be viewed beyond survivors of conflicts. They can take on the principal role in fostering reconciliation and peacebuilding process. Japan has provided support to a number of countries, including Somalia and Afghanistan, through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, in the efforts to involve women in reconciliation and creating a durable peace. In Burundi, Japan has been supporting a project that aims to strengthen economic capacity of the returnees, displaced women and those in local communities through jointly organizing economic activities for reconciliation and coexistence of women of various ethnic groups through this fund.

Such examples offer inspirations to those women who are struggling for survival every

day. I am sure that there are many more of similar successful examples in the world. I would like to suggest that the Secretariat compile good practices on women's participation in reconciliation and peacebuilding process and consider preparing a handbook for use in training program for peacekeepers and peacebuilding experts. It will be also useful to practitioners on the ground.

In closing, Mr. President, Japan strongly hopes that today's debate will contribute to deepening the understanding of the important issue and reaffirming our commitment to the objectives of SCR 1325.

Thank you very much.