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**Statement by Ms. Chinami Nishimura
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Fifty-fourth Session of the United Nations
Commission on the Status of Women**

**Fifteen-year review of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing + 15)
New York
5 March 2010**

Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I express my deepest sympathy and condolences to the people and the Government of the Republic of Haiti and the Republic of Chile for those affected by the devastating earthquake.

Mr. Chairperson,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude and respect to you, your fellow Bureau members and all those involved, for your dedicated efforts in preparing for this meeting.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since the First World Conference on Women was held in Mexico in 1975, the international community has made continued efforts to improve the status of women. In the course of this year, which marks the fifteenth anniversary of the “Beijing Platform for Action”, the Government of Japan will further enhance its efforts to implement the Beijing Platform for Action.

In Japan, a new administration took office last September. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Hatoyama, the Government of Japan is vigorously promoting gender

equality in all aspects of society, with a view to creating an environment in which every individual can maximize the best possible use of his or her abilities without being isolated, and can participate in society with motivation and dignity. For many years prior to my appointment as Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, I have valued partnership with civil society partners including NGOs and have been engaged in active dialogue with them, on various issues of concern to civil society. Based on this experience, I am convinced that, in order to create a gender-equal society, mutual collaboration and cooperation among a wide range of stakeholders, including international organizations and NGOs, are of crucial importance.

Today, bearing this conviction in mind, I would like to introduce concrete measures already taken and future directions planned by (the Government of) Japan towards achieving gender equality.

Mr. Chairperson,

Promoting gender equality and empowering women are not only one of the eight Millennium Development Goals. It is also necessary in achieving the rest of the Goals. Yet the progress to date in this area cannot be said to be sufficient.

In 2005, Japan formulated the “Initiative on Gender and Development (GAD)” as its basic policy on gender consideration in implementing ODA. Based on the Beijing Platform for Action, the Initiative placed gender mainstreaming as its core concept. Under this Initiative, we will strive to properly reflect gender perspective in all sectors including the development of legal systems and at all levels of ODA.

Mr. Chairperson,

I would now like to introduce Japan’s measures for realizing a gender-equal society at home.

Gender mainstreaming has been the challenge for the Government of Japan for many years. We have been engaged in comprehensive endeavors to create a gender-equal society. However, it is not easy to break through invisible walls or society’s glass ceiling in achieving the goal of gender equality. A certain level of progress has been observed, though it is still not sufficient, in many areas including equal employment opportunity,

thanks to the various efforts made by a wide range of stakeholders.

This year, the Government of Japan will formulate the “Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality”, in order to solidify our efforts to build a gender-equal society. We intend to ensure the plan’s effectiveness by setting concrete numerical targets to the extent possible and by setting priorities.

In Japan a variety of efforts have been made with the participation not only of the government but also of a wide range of social actors. As an example of such efforts, in 2007, the “Charter for Work-Life Balance” and accompanying “Action Policy” were formulated by a council consisting of relevant ministers and representatives of the business community, labor circles and local governments. The Government of Japan will improve the child care system and promote a working environment that facilitates utilization of such system, by setting specific numerical targets on working hours and the proportion of men taking child care leave.

With regard to the goal of elimination of violence against women, we have twice revised the “Act on the Prevention of Spousal Violence and the Protection of Victims”, legislation initiated by members of the Diet, in order to expand the definition of spousal violence and the protection order system. In December last year, the Government of Japan formulated a new “Action Plan of Measures to Combat Trafficking in Persons”. We will strengthen our efforts in response to the evolving situation of trafficking in persons, which the Government of Japan considers a priority area, considering diverse views from within and outside Japan.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Government of Japan also attaches utmost importance to cooperation with the international community in this field. Currently, discussions are under way at the United Nations to create a new, entity by consolidating four existing gender-related organizations. Japan intends to contribute actively to these discussions, so that, with the establishment of such an entity, all gender-related activities of the United Nations can organically cooperate with one another and can be implemented in an effective and efficient manner.

Regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Japan underwent examination by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women last July, and received the Committee's concluding observations in August. Currently the entire government is engaged in the follow-up on the recommendations of the Committee. In this regard, I would like to take this opportunity to mention Ms. Yoko Hayashi, a Japanese attorney-at-law who is serving as a member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. I am proud of Ms. Hayashi's active role and contribution to the work of the Committee, to which she brings her formidable expertise. I strongly hope that she will be re-elected at the elections to be held in June this year, and will continue to make major contributions to the improvement of the status of women.

This year, Japan serves as the Chair country of APEC. In the area of gender equality, Japan will host the APEC Women Leaders Network (WLN) meeting and the Gender Focal Point Network (GFPN) meeting in September. It is the first time for Japan to host these meetings. Japan believes that they will provide an opportunity to enhance the network of women leaders throughout the Asia and the Pacific region in order to promote the economic empowerment of women.

Mr. Chairperson,

Finally, I would like to provide assurances of my commitment to integrating the outcomes of Beijing + 15 into Japan's efforts to realize a gender-equal society. And I would like to conclude my statement by expressing our determination to further strengthen our cooperation with the international community, international organizations and civil society including NGOs, in order to advance the status of women.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.