

**Statement by Ms. Hiroko Hashimoto
Representative of Japan
61st Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women**

15 March 2017, New York

Mr. Chairperson,

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

Mr. Chairperson,

Last December, the Government of Japan held the World Assembly for Women (WAW!) in Tokyo for the third year in a row. Ninety-three prominent individuals, who play important roles in women-related areas, participated in the assembly as panelists and speakers in order to comprehensively discuss important themes which lead directly to women's economic empowerment, such as working-style reforms and women's leadership. I would like express my particular appreciation to Madam Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN-Women, who spoke at the Assembly.

We welcome that CSW61 has set Women's Economic Empowerment as its main agenda and we, the Government of Japan, look forward to participating proactively in the discussions of this committee. In addition, on 16 March, during CSW61, Japan will hold a WAW! follow-up side-event, and all of you are most welcome to attend.

The Government of Japan, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, upholding the realization of a society where all women can play active roles as one of our priority issues, is promoting working-style reforms in cooperation with the business sector. The Act on the Promotion of Women's Participation and Advancement in the Workplace, which fully entered into force last April, imposes an obligation on large companies to establish and execute action plans with numerical targets on women's recruitment and employment. As of January 2017, 100% of national and municipal governments and 99.9% of large companies have set their action plans under this Act.

Moreover, in order to change traditional labor practices—which presuppose long work hours and frequent regional transfers—we are embarking on unprecedented labor reforms. In fact, the movement for women's empowerment is gaining ground throughout Japanese Society as a

whole. The number of female employees has increased by approximately 1.5 million and the employment rate of women with children between the ages of 25 to 44 has reached 72.7% in 2016, up from 67.7% in 2012.

Mr. Chairperson,

Women's empowerment is an important task to be carried out by all countries, both developed and developing. In order to achieve the SDGs, Japan plans to contribute to efforts in both. During the G7 Ise-Shima Summit held last May, Japan, as chair, took the initiative to discuss women's empowerment at all related ministerial meetings, set women's issues as a priority agenda for the first time in the history of the G7, and established the "Guiding Principles" to help G7 countries take concrete actions towards women's empowerment around the world.

Furthermore, Prime Minister Abe announced Japan's decision to implement over 3 billion US dollars in cooperation for the promotion of the rights of women and girl, the building of the capacity of women and girls to reach their full potential, and the advancement of women's leadership in developing countries by 2018. In particular, efforts in the field of education for women and girls are crucially important to their empowerment. Japan is therefore taking proactive steps to enhance gender-sensitive learning environments and support women's life-long education, including through constructing toilets and dormitories for girls inside schools and ensuring safe commuting routes through school zones.

Mr. Chairperson,

In order to promote the economic empowerment of women in the business sector, we must not neglect to raise the awareness of both men and women and to support them to change actions and practices. While changing our own actions and practices, we will steadily make efforts, both domestically and internationally, to promote women's empowerment in cooperation with relevant actors who share a common purpose, including states, international organizations and civil society.

Thank you very much.