

Statement to The Hague Forum, 8-12 February 1999

As written:

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY
THE HEAD OF THE JAPANESE DELIGATION.
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TO THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS**

**THE INTERNATIONAL FORUM
FOR THE OPERATIONAL REVIEW AND APPRAISAL OF
IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME OF ACTION OF THE
INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON POPULATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

(THE HAGUE, THE NETHERLANDS, 8-12 FEBRUARY 1999)

Mr. Chairman,
ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to have this opportunity to express our views as to the Implementation of the Programme of Action of ICPD. First of all, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Netherlands, which is kindly hosting this Forum and to the UNFPA secretariat as well as to related staff who have worked so hard for preparing this Forum.

Mr. Chairman,

The five years since the Cairo conference have seen many changes that have proved to be more brutal than we had expected. The Asian economic crises, for example, have created a number of difficult issues, including the breaking-down of the social safety network for the vulnerable **populations** in the region and the inability of the governments concerned to rectify the situation.

In his policy speech last December in Hanoi, Vietnam, Prime Minister of Japan, Mr. Keizo Obuchi launched the “ Human Security ” initiative.

“ Human Security ” is a concept that takes a comprehensive view of all threats to human survival, life and dignity, and stresses the need to respond to such threats. The threats to human security may **include** crime and violence, trafficking in women and children, exodus of refugees, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, drugs, environmental degradation and others. Most of these threats are indeed covered by the Programme of Action adopted at the ICPD in Cairo.

Japan has been committed to strengthening its contribution in order to help the developing countries in implementing the **ICPD** Programme of Action. As we

have mentioned on several occasions, Japan launched the Global Issues Initiative (GII) on Population and AIDS in 1994, under which it will provide assistance at a target amount of US \$ 3 billion by the year 2000. It adopts a sector approach, combining ODA loans, grant aid and technical cooperation into one package.

Moreover, this initiative, which is based on **ICPD's** comprehensive approach to population and development, will promote cooperation encompassing direct cooperation for population such as mother-child health care and family-planning, and indirect cooperation for population such as primary education and vocational training for women as well as cooperation relating to HIV/AIDS. In order to implement the Initiative, we have been undertaking intensive policy dialogues with developing countries, major donors and international organizations. Project Formulation **Missions** dispatched by the government have been sent to a number of developing countries in order to formulate concrete projects. Japan has also been the largest donor to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) **since** 1986.

Through these efforts, in the four years from FY 1994 through FY 1997, Japan has initiated projects in a number of countries, and has provided assistance of approximately US \$ 2.4 billion, thereby achieving almost four-fifths of its seven-year goal.

Furthermore, regarding support for women, at the Fourth World Women's Conference held in 1995, Japan announced its " Women in Development (WID) Initiative. " In this WID initiative, Japan pledged to step up efforts to increase its development assistance in the field of WID, particularly in three priority areas -- (i) education, (ii) health, and (iii) participation **by women in socioeconomic activities** -- **in** order to improve women's social status and **rectify gender inequality**. Specifically, Japan will implement projects that will **mainly benefit women, such as**

the construction of vocational **training facilities** mainly for women, vocational training, literacy education, and support for mother-child health. Furthermore, experts in survey and planning from the viewpoint of gender-WID have joined project formulation missions to hear opinions from residents of the areas that will receive Japan's assistance so that the government can take into consideration the participation and **benefits** of women when formulating and implementing **prejects**.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan recognizes the importance of the grassroots activities which Non-Governmental Organizations (**NGOs**) are carrying out in **fields** where governments and international organizations are not always able to deliver adequate service. It would not be going too far to say that the relationship between governments and international organizations and **NGOs** in these fields is a complementary one. Japan has intensified its support for grassroots projects conducted by **NGOs** in its bilateral cooperation in the field of population, support which includes enhancing dialogues with **NGOs** from the stage of project formulation onward. Establishing this kind of partnership with **NGOs** is also important from a multilateral level.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to touch upon the efforts that Japan has made in addressing population issues that have arisen in Japan itself. Shortly after the Second world War, Japan underwent rapid population growth. In solving our population problem that developed **after** World War II, grassroots campaigns to diffuse knowledge about family planning conducted by **NGOs**, nurses, and midwives played an important role. A significant contribution was also made by improvements, which had continued since before the war, in the education of both

genders and in the primary health care available **to mothers and children**. These basic activities, along with improvements in living standards, are essential for resolving population issues. Japan, as a nation of peace, has continued to contribute vigorously to the international community, mainly through activities in its areas of strength such as the economic and social fields.

In the coming years, Japan, like many of the developed countries, must deal with a rapidly aging population and the trend toward fewer children. According to the new future population projections prepared in 1997 by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research, it is predicted that the proportion of the population above 65 years of age in Japan, will reach the 25% level in 2015, and the 32% level in 2050, up from the 14.6% level in 1995. The aging population and the trend toward fewer children issues, which are faced by developed countries and will be faced by developing countries, are an area in which Japan could make full use of its capabilities, to deal with them.

Japan has been undertaking a variety of measures to enhance activities in the area of reproductive health. It provides equal educational opportunities to both genders. The health **care system** protects and fosters the health of mothers and children by distributing a **Maternal** and Child Health Handbook, providing women from the age of puberty on with the opportunity to receive counseling and guidance about pregnancy, childbirth, and childcare. These measures enable women to make their own choices and decisions based on accurate information, and along with the improvements in the conduct of Japanese men, have brought about a decline in the rates of infant mortality and birth. Furthermore, prefectures, designated cities, and core cities have been implementing lifelong health support projects for **women, which feature counseling for infertile women and health education, since FY 1996**.

In order to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, in 1996, Japan formulated “ **The Plan for Gender Equality 2000- A National Plan of Action for the Promotion of a Gender Equal Society by the Year 2000.** ”, a

plan that reflects the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As its four basic targets, the plan calls for “ building social systems that promote gender equality, ” “ achieving gender **equality** in the workplace, family, and community, ” “ creating a society where the human rights of women are promoted and defended, ” and “ contributing to the equality, development, and peace of the **global** community. ” One of the priority objectives under the third basic target is “ Supporting Life-long Health for Women, ” which describes **the** significance of the concept and the promotion of reproductive health/rights. Based on this national plan of action, **all** government ministries and agencies will continue to promote relevant policies and measures.

Before concluding, I **would** like to reiterate Japan’s strong commitment to tackling the population problem and its hope for the resounding success of this Forum.

Thank you very much.