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Press Release

Speech by H.E. Mr. Nobutaka Machimura
State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal
of the implementation of the Programme of Action
of the International Conference on Population and Development
1 July 1999

Mr. President,
Ladies and gentlemen,

(Background)

It has been five years since the Cairo Conference. Humankind is now being exposed to a range of threats. To tackle the issues related to population, the international community must be united in its actions, while at the same time recognizing the value and the rights of individuals from the viewpoint of human security. "Human security" is a concept that takes a comprehensive view of all threats to the survival, livelihoods, and dignity of human beings, and stresses the need to respond to such threats.

Moreover, population issues are related to socioeconomic problems in their entirety. These issues must be addressed by taking a comprehensive approach that promotes basic health care, education, and the advancement of women. Only when we address these issues from a multi-dimensional viewpoint can we resolve population issues. In this connection, in order to deal with population issues, I think it is important to fully recognize the interdependent relationship between development, population, food security, and the environment.

(Concerning the "Proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action")

Mr. President,

I believe that the Programme of Action adopted at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development was the crystallization of humankind's wisdom for laying down the guiding principles that will carry us into the twenty-first century in the area of population and development.

Japan supports the "proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the Programme of Action," as they expressly designate areas that should be given high priority

and set specific targets to be achieved, including the lowering of maternal mortality and morbidity rates, and the reduction of HIV infection rates.

(Japan's efforts for resolving domestic population problems)

Mr. President,

Next, I would like to speak briefly about some of Japan's specific efforts to deal with population issues. Japan has been successful in lowering its infant and maternal mortality rates, and has also implemented a variety of measures based on the concepts and spirit of reproductive health services that were newly proposed at the Cairo conference.

Japan established its national health insurance and pension schemes in **1961**, and since then has set up a social security system, introduced a long-term care insurance system which is to enter into force next April, and taken other measures to cope with its rapidly aging society. With regard to the recent situation of substantially lower fertility rates, Japan has been making concerted efforts both to alleviate problems arising from the strains of balancing work and childcare and to enhance societal support for raising children. Moreover, a basic law passed by the Diet recently is expected to provide the foundation for the realization of an equal partnership between men and women and to advance gender equality and the empowerment of women.

(Japan's contribution to the international organization and the Global Issues Initiative)

Mr. President,

In the field of population, Japan has been contributing funding to the UNFPA and WHO, and UNAIDS; it has been the largest contributor to the UNFPA from **1986** to the present. In February 1994, Japan announced its "Global Issues Initiative on Population and AIDS" (GII), which set the goal of committing 3 billion U.S. dollars in Japan's ODA program to population and HIV/AIDS activities during the seven-year period from FY1994 to FY2000.

In recognition of the importance of ensuring reproductive health, the GII calls for a comprehensive approach, covering primary health care for women and children, primary education and the empowerment of women, and is in addition to Japan's assistance directly related to population control and family planning. The GII also emphasizes collaboration with other major donor countries, international organizations and NGOs. Japan's ODA commitment to the GII has already exceeded its target, having reached approximately 3.7 billion dollars by the end of fiscal 1998.

Population and HIV/AIDS are issues that must be urgently addressed by the international community as a whole. Therefore, in the future as well, Japan will continue to give them high priority in its ODA policy, focusing more on population control and measures

against HIV/AIDS, While strengthening its collaboration and cooperation with other donor countries, international organizations and NGOs, Japan is determined to continue to play an active role in the world's efforts to tackle the issues of population and HIV/AIDS.

(Conclusion)

In closing, I would like to express my sincere hope for the success of this conference and assure you that Japan will continue to play a positive role in the world's efforts to cope with population issues.

Thank you for your attention.