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Mr. Shigekazu Sato, Director-General of the Economic Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Shoji Nishimoto, Assistant Administrator and Director of the Bureau of Development Policy, for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is indeed my great honor to come here this morning and to participate in this very important symposium. This symposium provides an important occasion to examine and discuss gender dimensions of development assistance in the context of the Japan-United Nations (UN) partnership. I would also like to take this time to congratulate Madame Komiyama for her tireless efforts in pursuit of, I would say, social justice, including gender equality, as a parliamentarian. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Madame Yuge, Director of the UNDP Tokyo Office. She has done a marvelous job. She has a very deep impact; I think we are all very proud to have this Director of UNDP in Tokyo.

Now, gender equality and women's empowerment is the key to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In the year 2000, leaders of the 189 nations adopted the Millennium Declaration, thereby committing themselves to eradicate poverty and to promote sustainable development. This commitment was translated into the MDGs that contain, as you all know, eight numerical time-bound goals with the target year of 2015. Of the eight goals, Goal 3 specifically aims to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. While this is an urgent necessity in itself, it is also clear that gender equality and the empowerment of

women are the vehicles of achieving all other goals. If half of the population is neglected or not fully targeted in the process of addressing human poverty, we cannot even pretend to say that we have made efforts.

Two months ago in New York, the world's Heads of State reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit, as was mentioned by Madame Komiyama, that "Gender equality and the promotion and protection of the full enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all are essential to advance the development of peace and security." It was also reiterated that the full and effective implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is an essential contribution to achieving the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the MDGs and also the Millennium Declaration itself. We, the international community, need to ensure that all of our efforts leave no one behind, and that all of our national efforts leave no one behind. I speak as a minister on this matter. But the process needs to be inclusive to reach the most vulnerable population—that is poor women and girls in many countries. As was clearly stated in the resolution of the 2005 World Summit, "Progress for women is progress for all."

We should not assume that development benefits women automatically. There is a myth that development assistance is gender-neutral and it benefits people regardless of his or her sex. If that is the case, why does poverty hit women disproportionately? Women constitute 70% of the poor population. It is a reflection of the fact that gender-neutral interventions do not result in equal benefit for men and women. Women experience poverty differently than men because of their traditional, disadvantaged positions in household and society. They have limited access to productive resources, vital information, or technologies. Poor women do not have equal voice in government and in critical decision-making processes that affect their own lives. Without understanding such

inequalities that are perpetuated in society, legislation and economic labor market gender gaps would continue to widen, and poor women would end up in even more vulnerable positions. I would like to stress that the international community must give, and I would like to ask UNDP to give stronger support to empower women. I will do my part as a minister on this matter for my population, and I will try to reach out to the international community where there is an opportunity to help women in these perspectives. But international organizations must do more along those causes. We should help the local population take leadership in the communities, in societies, in development work, in politics, and in nation-building. I think that is the only way for any development activities to work.

Now, gender mainstreaming is a challenge, and it is a challenge worldwide. It is still a challenge in my society. Gender mainstreaming is a challenging, yet necessary process for building a better life for everyone. Gender mainstreaming is recognized as a necessary approach for achieving gender equality and for building an inclusive society. Inclusion is a very important social concept in the 21st century. Gender mainstreaming is about being conscious of existing gaps. To know is very important. You need to be conscious of the existing gaps, inequalities between men and women. You need to develop a strategy to eliminate those gaps and take concrete actions towards removing those gaps. However this still remains a major challenge in both developing and developed societies like mine. I think no government can really conclude that this process has been completed.

Now, an organization is gender mainstreamed only when each individual in the organization is fully aware of the gender issues. So we have to make everybody aware of these issues and committed to taking action in his or her own work and life. That is why gender mainstreaming takes time and continuous effort. However, we can certainly make a difference, and we have to make a difference, and

we will be able to make a difference if we have the right components. What are the right or necessary, components? Those could include, first of all, innovative thinking. I think we have to start with the cognition of the matter. Innovative thinking, strong political will—I hope I can help provide such political will, now that I am in politics and also leading this part of the government—raising awareness through advocacy and training (UNDP will have a lot to do in this area), and strategic partnerships. Strategic partnerships include partnerships among the national government, international organizations, civil society, academia, business communities, and so forth. Now gender mainstreaming is a key for building a sustainable, inclusive society in any country, and we can all act together.

Now let me turn to our part of contribution to these issues. The UNDP/Japan Women in Development (WID) Fund is an example of a unique and successful partnership in promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women. I would like to take this opportunity to indeed commend the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for taking this very important initiative and for keeping that initiative. Firstly, I am very pleased with the initiatives of the Government of Japan to support gender equality and women's empowerment in developing countries through the provision of resources to UNDP for the past 10 years. I understand that this fund is the only global resource-base in UNDP that specifically focuses on gender projects in developing countries. I think that we indeed need this area, and we provide resources to make sure that the leadership is there. Expertise and financial resources are required to translate the rhetoric or the statement of gender mainstreaming into concrete actions, and into making a real difference. Japan's contributions supported UNDP, making a real difference in the lives of many poor women in developing countries around the world. I hope that this can be done more.

Secondly, strategic partnerships are a key to mainstreaming gender, and I am pleased that we

chose UNDP as a partner for this joint endeavor. This fund was also able to draw on UNDP's years of experience in developing countries and on global networks thereby enabling the forming of alliances with local partners at the grass-roots level as well as with the world's top level experts and research institutions. As I said these networks and synergies are the key and particularly with civil society and in a multilateral community and government. Such alliances with a broad range of partners enabled the pursuit of the gender agenda and the development of new methodologies for gender mainstreaming.

Now let me take a few minutes to express how we have combated the problems of gender inequality in this country. For the 10 years that have passed, since the 4th World Conference on Women, Japan has done its best to take concrete steps for the advancement of women, and this is really the impact of the Beijing Platform for Action. Also, of course, there is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which has proven effective in protecting the human rights of women and promoting gender equality in Japan as well. In 1999 we have installed what we call the Basic Law, this is the Basic Law for a Gender-Equal Society. It was indeed a hallmark achievement in our country. In 1999, this basic law was launched and was promulgated in order to promote measures comprehensively and effectively by the state, local government, and the civil society. It called for partnership among those three. It is not only the job of the state, it is not only for the local government to implement, but it is the responsibility of the state, the local government, and the civil society to act with a sense of commitment.

In accordance with this law, we have written and launched what we call a Basic Plan for Gender Equality and this was formulated in 2000. I am now in the process of rewriting it, because it has to be reviewed every five years. This is the fifth year since the first Basic Plan for Gender Equality was formulated. Now this basic plan was also a very

important turning point because it implemented and forced many government sectors to implement gender-equal policies, which, in the past, was not necessarily given the highest priority. Now we have a council in the government, which is called the Council for Gender Equality and this was established in 2001. It has always been chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary. So the national machinery in this area, in this country, is very high-ranked. It is chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, but today the government, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi has appointed a minister specifically in charge. But still the top echelon of the government is fully committed to this gender equality council and the gender equality council will still be chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary.

One of the most important areas we intend to promote is to make sure that women participate in the decision-making process. We have a target that in the year 2020 women will occupy at least 30% of the leadership positions in all sectors of the society. In some areas this is already forthcoming, particularly in the government sector I think we have made a dramatic success. Still the business community, academia—I come from academia—and in many areas this target for 2020 is a very important goal that needs to be matched only with very special efforts.

Now in concluding my remarks, I would like to stress once again that gender mainstreaming is an on-going process for every country, for everyone. It requires all kinds of partnerships: global partnerships, strong political will, and participation and commitment of civil society to help us all. I would say that the UNDP/Japan WID Fund has now given us back a source of knowledge and innovative ideas and approaches for mainstreaming gender. I think we have a lot to learn, all of us, all countries have a lot to learn from the work of UNDP with a special focus on gender. I certainly hope that many positive outcomes will be replicated and scaled up to benefit a larger number of women in different

parts of the world. I also hope that this fruitful partnership between Japan and UNDP will continue in the future to promote gender equality, to empower women, to reduce poverty, and to increase social justice around the world. I am determined to do my best as minister in charge of gender equality in Japan and I hope I have your full support. Thank you very much.

警察や解放軍からの暴力等の問題)・法律の整備について(女性の方針決定参画の重要性)、そしてアジアという地域における平和構築のポイントなどについて、私がコーディネーターを務め、話し合いました。

議連としては、引き続き、ジェンダーにとらわれない視点をすべてにいれていくジェンダーの主流化、そのためのWIDの増大に向けて、活動を続けていきたいと考えています。