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Statement by Ms. Azusa Shinohara
Alternate Representative of Japan

on

Item 62 (a): Advancement of women

Item 62 (b): Implementation of the outcome of the Fourth World Conference
on Women and of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly

Third Committee

64th Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

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Mr. Chairman,

It is an honor to address the Third Committee on behalf of the Government of Japan on the important issue of the advancement of women. Japan has been actively engaged in the work of creating a gender-equal society and promoting women's empowerment, based on a series of internationally agreed principles and instruments, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. As we approach the year 2010, Beijing +15, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you some of our commitments, views and experiences.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me commence by pointing out Japan's views on some of the recent developments in this field. Japan strongly believes it is crucial to promote gender mainstreaming in every phase of UN activities, and to do so in the most effective and efficient manner. It is for this reason that we recently participated in the consensus adopting the resolution supporting the establishment of a new gender

entity at the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. We must bear in mind the need to avoid duplication and fragmentation and thus, simply creating a new gender entity is not sufficient to ensure the coherence of the entire UN system. To this end, it is our intention to engage actively in the upcoming discussions on this very important issue, so that we may succeed in moving forward with coherent and effective UN gender operations.

Concerning the efforts that have been made to eliminate all forms of violence against women, Japan, as one of the co-sponsors, welcomes the recent adoption of the Security Council resolution 1888 requesting the appointment of a Special Representative on sexual violence in armed conflict. Japan, together with many others in the international community, supports the view that coordination of UN activities must be enhanced and the rule of law should be strengthened in post-conflict countries. Moreover, as peace-building is one of the priority issues Japan regards in its development assistance, we believe it is critical to enhance women's participation in the peace-building process. One of such examples is the "Northern Uganda Early Recovery Project" funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security. This project includes activities such as encouraging women to engage in peace-building and conflict-prevention processes by conducting community reconciliation and dialogue meetings.

Mr. Chairman,

In July this year, Japan's sixth report was examined by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, in the course of which there was a constructive dialogue between Committee members and the government. While the Committee welcomed the positive steps taken by Japan to date, such as the appointment of a Minister for Gender Equality, it also pointed out a number of areas in which more progress should be made.

One of those areas is the participation of women in the decision-making process, which remains quite low in Japan. In this regard, I would like to point out that there has been an encouraging development, namely, the result of the general

election that took place this past August. 54 women are now members of the House of Representatives, which accounts for 11.3 per cent of the total seats, the highest proportion in our history. Although the pace of progress may seem slow, Japan will continue to make every effort to achieve its goals.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan wishes to warmly welcome the convening of the Beijing +15 meetings, which are to be held at the next session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March. At the last session, the focus of discussion was on the reality that women bear most of the burden of caregiving, in the family and the community as a whole. Responding to this theme, Japan, together with the UNDP, held a symposium in Tokyo in June to discuss unpaid care work, particularly in the context of the current economic crisis.

I wish to conclude by affirming that Japan intends to take next year's fifteenth anniversary as an opportunity to renew its commitment to further contribute to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment both domestically and internationally.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.