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Statement by Ms. Hiroko Hashimoto
Representative of Japan

At the Fifty-sixth Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women

Madam Chairperson,

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

Madam Chairperson,

Let me begin by expressing our sincere gratitude for the warm and full support extended by many countries who Japan was hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake just about a year ago on March 11. The devastating earthquake did, however, bring us an opportunity to renew our appreciation of the power and role of women in disaster risk reduction, response and recovery. With a view to sharing our experience and lessons learned, and to promote better disaster management in the international community, we are sponsoring a panel discussion at this 56th session of CSW on “Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women in Disaster”. We truly hope that through discussions on this resolution, our common knowledge about this important issue will be deepened, and that we will be able to advance disaster management in coordination with relevant UN entities including UN Women.

Madam Chairperson,

In January this year, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda stated in Policy Speech to the Diet that “women’s participation in a variety of fields is critical to the demonstration of capabilities, a critical key to increasing diversity, creating a more and a vibrant Japan” and the Basic Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami Reconstruction Efforts adopted by the government last year clearly stipulates that women’s participation is promoted in all aspects of recovery and that women’s entrepreneurial activities are supported, including the start-up of community-based businesses in rural areas. In order to realize the motto that the Japanese are the

process of building an inclusive society in which actors including women, children, the elderly and the persons with disabilities actively participate while respecting the protection of gender equality.

Based on the "Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality" approved by the cabinet in December 2010, Japan is endeavoring to promote gender equality in various fields in society. The details of our intensified efforts on the temporary special measures based on the Basic Plan were reported to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) last year as part of Japan's follow-up information to the Committee's concluding observations, and our efforts have been highly evaluated by the Committee.

As for the promotion of gender equality in rural areas, and in agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors, the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries shall promote the creation of an environment in which women's roles in farming operations are fairly assessed and women can be actively involved in farm management and other relevant activities at their own initiatives. It is also one of the priority areas in the Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, after creating a section specializing in gender equality – a 'Gender Equality Group' within 'Women and Elder Affairs Office' which is placed under 'Young Farmers and Women Division' –, is undertaking a comprehensive set of measures toward activating rural communities, based on the aforementioned Law and Fair.

First, in order to promote women's participation in rural and agricultural decision-making processes, specific targets are set for the ratio of chair and board members for agricultural organizations and committees. To achieve these targets, various awareness-raising activities are conducted every year, including the observation of "Rural Women's Day" on March 10. In order to advance the economic empowerment of rural areas, the government is promoting measures to clearly define the role of women in agricultural management and to provide training for activities to intensify and stabilize women's entrepreneurial activities in the processing and selling of products while utilizing local and rural resources. The government is trying to create a women-friendly rural environment in which women can balance their work and life through such measures as the promotion of the "family management agreement", which stipulates management principles and decent work conditions in order to have a democratic and working environment in each family engaged, especially in agriculture.

Furthermore, I am pleased to introduce to you some of our latest measures in this area. Currently, the government is pursuing the diversification of the management of the agriculture, forestry

and money costs by promoting the integration of production, processing and marketing, and the development of new industries utilizing local resources. Considering that maximizing women's participation is critical in this effort, starting this year it will become compulsory to secure at least 50% female membership in the committees responsible for formulating master plans for the local agriculture. The 10% quota for female entrepreneurs has also been set in the field of job creation. In addition, the government is intensifying its support for women in rural areas by promoting a women's network at the national and local levels, as well as opportunities for exchanging with women in other sectors.

Madam Chairperson,

Living Gender and Development Japan is integrating a gender perspective into all areas and phases of its rural development assistance. A gender aspect is also included in the Ministry's Rural Development Policy, 2015, announced at the UN MDG Summit in September 2010. For assistance in agriculture and rural development sectors, as well as formulating guidelines on gender mainstreaming, gender analysis is conducted prior to and implementation of each project to understand the role, challenges and needs of women in the target area. Based on these policies and measures, Japan has been promoting the participation of women in rural areas and furthermore, as part of our commitment to promote gender mainstreaming cooperation with international organizations, the government is currently considering the doubling our core contribution to the UN Women for this year.

Madam Chairperson,

Last but not least, I would like to mention that NGOs have been playing an active role in response to the earthquake, including providing immediate assistance for the victims, conducting researches and symposiums, as well as sharing experiences with the government. With such experience, we renewed our appreciation of the significance of women's participation and role of civil society. I would like to conclude my statement by expressing our determination to continue to cooperate with the international community, international organizations and civil society in our efforts to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.