

**Statement by Mr. Ikuo Yamahana,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs
on the Occasion of Annual Ministerial Review,
Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)**

**Mr. President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On March 11, the unprecedented earthquake struck Japan, and many precious lives were lost. At Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, after damaged by the tsunami, efforts to bring the situation under control are continuing day and night. On behalf of the government and the people of Japan, I would like to express our profound gratitude for the solidarity shown by the international community immediately after the disaster.

It is essential for Japan's reconstruction to stimulate its economy. Many regions of our country remain unharmed, and Japan continues to be open for business and travel more than ever. Economic activities at affected regions have moved rapidly toward recovery and approximately 90% of the production bases are expected to recover by this summer. It is also expected that the reconstruction demand will drive Japanese economy towards recovery from the second half of this year. I would like to emphasize that further promotion of business, visit to and study in Japan will be the most helpful support for our country.

In order to come up with the source of funding for reconstruction, Japan had to reduce part of its ODA budget as a temporary measure, only for the current fiscal year. However, this is a temporary reduction of the parts that would not affect Japan's bilateral assistance projects or activities by the United Nations. Moreover, Japan would make its utmost efforts to allocate the reduced budget as immediately as possible.

Japan is determined to continue to play an active role in contributing to peace and stability in the international community. This will also allow us to express our appreciation to the international community for the solidarity shown to us since the

disaster. Japan remains fully dedicated to carrying out faithfully the international commitments it has expressed in the past.

Japan held the MDGs follow-up meeting in Tokyo this June and received the participation of a broad range of stakeholders. At this meeting, we discussed truly effective methods we should take in order to achieve the MDGs in the remaining five years. Regarding education, we discussed the bottlenecks and practical interventions at the breakout session under the themes of "improving the quality of education" and "ensuring equity in education." Through these discussions, we strengthened the political momentum toward the achievement the MDGs.

Among the victims of the Great East-Japan Earthquake, there are a number of pupils who suddenly became unable to attend schools they were accustomed to. When I visited the affected region, I reaffirmed the importance of school education for children.

Education is an important element for human development that enhances ability and possibility of individuals. Education also supports nation-building, works as a driving force for economic development and a foundation for a peaceful society. Education is also essential to people's empowerment that human security upholds. Therefore, the Government of Japan attaches its importance to support in the education sector in the international cooperation. Japan is determined to continue to faithfully implement "Kan Commitment" including the financial commitment to provide US\$3.5 billion in the field of education in five years from 2011.

There are still various challenges in the education sector we must address. The most important challenge is to identify bottlenecks for each issue, and to implement concrete approaches which are effective and sustainable in the fields. To that end, countries and international organizations should share wisdoms to date. From this perspective, we would like to promote and implement our assistance model in the area of basic education 'School for All' broadly by collaborating with many developing countries, donor countries, international organizations and civil societies. At the MDGs follow-up meeting, we compiled a good-practice list including this model. We hope more effective approaches will be made by countries and international organizations by referring to or using this list.

I hope that effective approaches will be further promoted through coordination among countries and international organizations, utilizing their respective expertise. I would like to keep working together, with all participants here today, for the day when all children can open the way to their future with their own hands.

Thank you for your kind attention.

