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**Statement by Ambassador Kaoru Ishikawa,
Head of the Japanese Delegation**

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ECOSOC High-Level Segment, 2004

**"Resources mobilization and enabling environment for poverty eradication in
the context of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least
Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010"**

**New York
29 June 2004**

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I come from a country that was totally devastated sixty years ago. Not only the capital, Tokyo, but almost all cities and towns were totally flattened and burned down by the bombardments. It took more than a decade to rebuild the nation, and the successful reconstruction from the postwar ashes was owing to the strenuous efforts of ordinary people. Based on that experience, let me talk about my confidence in ordinary people's power, the power that will make the plight of LDCs a thing of the past. I will talk today about confidence, hope, and solidarity.

To build a nation where people can live their lives with dignity, I believe that "peace, security, and good governance" are prerequisites. These three elements will convince every individual in a society that "tomorrow can be better than today," and the most important keyword towards this end is hope, which will lead the individual to anticipate a future of greater predictability. For instance, greater predictability is essential for farmers in LDCs; it helps them decide when they should sow their seeds. Peace, security, and good governance guarantee ordinary people predictability, social, political, and economic participation, and most importantly, hope. I call these the three P's, namely, predictability,

participation, and prevention of conflict.

With hope in their hearts, people can make an investment: in education, which is an investment in the future, and in medical care, which is an investment in their own health and that of their friends and family. Then people will be able to afford to treat their partners affectionately and with respect, and this will lead to gender equality. These three pillars, education, health, and gender, I believe, constitute the most important part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Progress achieved in implementing all of these commitments is to be reviewed next year, halfway to the final deadline of 2015.

A bottom-up approach based on these three main pillars of education, health, and gender is absolutely required for the achievement of the MDGs. It is also essential to create a solid and sound national economic environment, free of corruption and fraud, in which regional capital or revenue obtained within a country can be funneled into national investment. In my country, there is an old proverb: "the people are the stone walls of a castle; the people are the castle itself." This illustrates the stress Japan has long placed on nation-building based on confidence and trust in the society. Indeed, if we want to build a nation, ordinary people should participate in the process; there should be political participation based on democratic elections and economic participation based on a market economy. Needless to say, this is the only way people will be able to develop mutual confidence.

Japan has led the world in the field of official development assistance for the last decade by shouldering alone more than one fifth of the world's total ODA. I want to assure you again of our firm commitment to supporting developing countries through the provision of ODA in their efforts to solve their problems. In particular, I would like to emphasize the importance of the concept of "human security," which is a notion that focuses on the individual or community facing various kinds of threats. It promotes an approach consisting of human resources development and community building that protects and empowers each individual, and thus leads to nation-building. The concept of human security is one of the basic policies described in Japan's Official Development Assistance Charter, revised by the Japanese Government in August 2003.

I am convinced that the international community should further develop the

capacity building of each person. In other words, what is paramount is empowerment of people. Empowered people can stand on their own feet in the process of nation-building, and if the number of empowered people reaches a critical mass, the nation will be successfully developed with full "ownership." To this end, Japan will continue to stand by those in need, in a spirit of solidarity and not out of charity. TICAD, Tokyo International Conference on African Development, process is just a concrete example of Japanese solidarity.

Madam Chair,

Let me take this occasion to draw your attention to the issue of natural disaster reduction, because natural disasters strike at the poorest and the weakest. My country has notoriously been called a department store of natural disasters, as it is regularly battered by typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions. Our casualties, however, have dramatically decreased since the 1960s, because, while we can not tell typhoons not to come, we can tell people when and where to go. If we could have greater predictability with respect to natural disasters in LDCs, they would suffer fewer casualties and fewer obstacles to nation-building. Indeed we should not close our eyes to the very fact that decades of nation-building efforts can be washed away by a single flood.

Bearing this in mind, I would like to extend a warm invitation to you all to come to Kobe in January next year to participate in the World Conference on Disaster Reduction.

Madam Chair,

In concluding, let me reiterate three points.

One, peace, security, and good governance are prerequisites for ordinary people to build their nation.

Two, without peace, security, and good governance, nobody, nationals or foreigners, will invest in a country.

Three, my country will continue to extend support based on solidarity, which means mutual respect, and will continue to stand by those in need.

Thank you for your attention.