



(Check Against Delivery)

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Madame Chair,

At the outset, I would like to express my congratulations to you and the respectable members of the bureau on this historic 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD). Since its first session held at Lake Success, New York in 1947, the Commission has played a pivotal role to raise awareness of population issues among all its member countries, and has acted for the well-being of the population of the entire world. Japan became a member of the Commission in 1957, shortly after joining the UN in 1956, and since then has continuously and actively participated in this endeavor in the spirit of international collaboration.

This year's theme: "Changing population age structures and sustainable development" is quite important as the process of global ageing advances and inter-generational relationship is becoming important more than ever.

Population ageing is quite notable in Japan, where one in every four people is aged 65 years and over; the highest proportion in the world. Population decline is a steady trend and the proportion of the elderly is estimated to rise as high as 40% by 2060. The speed of ageing in Japan has been very quick compared to the Western countries, and we need therefore to reform the social security system to adapt to the country's rapidly evolving population age structure.

At present, both life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in Japan are among the highest in the world, and they are both still rising. Universal coverage for both health insurance and pension were achieved in Japan as early as 1961, but since then it has been necessary to carry out countless reforms. In 2000, our long-term care insurance system was introduced through the integration of the public and private sectors of our medical care and

welfare systems. However, due to the increasing number of oldest-old, the cost of medical and long-term care is increasing, which poses enormous challenges to the sustainability of these systems.

The structure of the Japanese family and household is also changing. In 1970, 80% of our elderly were living with their children, but by 2015 this ratio had halved to 41%, while 18% of the elderly live alone and 35% live only with their spouse. The increasing number of single-person elderly households is a sign of the increased independence of the elderly, but once they come to the point of needing long-term care, it becomes a challenge. The community-based integrated care system is one of the many solutions we are pursuing to tackle the situation.

The income security of the elderly, mostly through the pension system, needs reform in order to remain sustainable. Since 2005, the “Macro Economic Slide”—a mechanism to adjust pension payments—was introduced and the total pension expenditure decreased in 2014. Partially due to this, the labor participation rate of the elderly is increasing. The non-payment of pension, especially by the younger generation, is also a potential threat to the system’s sustainability, and a trustworthy pension scheme should be maintained.

While the number of elderly, and hence the median age, is increasing, the inter-generational relationship is becoming an increasingly important issue. In 2016, the voting age was lowered from 20 to 18, and “Work Style Reform” is currently being undertaken in order to improve employment conditions and work-life balance in Japan, especially for women and younger adults.

Madame Chair,

Ageing is a global phenomenon. The absolute number of the elderly is going to increase in all regions of the world, including Sub-Saharan Africa. In Asia, the increase of both the proportion and number of the elderly is particularly notable, and the speed of ageing is rapid, even more rapid than has been experienced by Japan. To cope with this situation, Japan launched the Asia Health and Well-being Initiative in 2016 and is working to promote the development of health and long-term care systems for the elderly throughout Asia, through knowledge transfer based on Japanese experiences and human exchange.

Already, a number of ODA technical cooperation projects are being carried out in such fields as active-ageing, long-term care, and pension and social security reform. One example is the project on long-term care service development for the frail elderly and other

vulnerable people in Thailand; another is the project on strengthening the capacity for social insurance operation in Mongolia. Further international collaboration is anticipated.

Global ageing is a relatively new issue in the field of population and development; however, there still remain the unfinished agenda of the Cairo Programme of Action. Sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, maternal and child health are still the unchangeable focus of population and development. Steady efforts must be made to accomplish the Sustainable Development Goals.

Thank you.