

Statement to the Commission on Population and Development  
Acting as Preparatory Committee for the Special Session  
of the General Assembly

As written

# Japan

PERMANENT MISSION OF JAPAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Press **Release**

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Commission on Population and Development acting as the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly for the Review and Appraisal of the Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development

24 March 1999

Mr. Chairman,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to have this opportunity to express our views as to the Implementation of the Programme of Action of **ICPD**. First of all, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express our congratulations to your election as chairman and extend my sincere appreciation to the DESA and the UNFPA secretariat staff who have worked so hard for preparing this committee meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

The five years since the Cairo conference have seen many changes that have proved to be more serious than we had expected. Against the background of difficulties throughout the world, it is imperative to ensure the survival and safety of mankind and the protection of their dignity from various threats. These threats may include crime and violence, trafficking in women and children, exodus of refugees, infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, poverty, drugs, environmental degradation and others. Most of these threats are indeed covered by the Programme of Action adopted at the **ICPD** in Cairo.

Mr. Chairman,

Five years after the Cairo conference in 1994, we are meeting here to review the progress towards implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretariat for the report of the Secretary-General containing proposals for key actions for the further implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan has been committed to strengthening its contribution in order to help the developing countries in implementing the ICPD Programme of Action. As we have mentioned on several occasions, Japan launched the Global Issues Initiative (GII) on Population and AIDS in **1994**, under which it will provide assistance at a target amount of US \$3 billion by the year 2000. It combines ODA loans, grant aid and technical cooperation into one package.

Moreover, this initiative, which is based on ICPD's comprehensive approach encompassing population and development, will promote cooperation encompassing direct cooperation for population such as maternal and child health care and family-planning, and indirect cooperation for population such as primary education and vocational training for women as well as cooperation relating to HIV/AIDS. In order to implement the Initiative, we have been undertaking intensive policy dialogues with developing countries, major donors and international organizations.

Through these efforts, in the four years from FY **1994** to FY **1997**, Japan has initiated projects in a number of countries, and provided assistance of approximately US \$2.4 billion, thereby achieving almost four-fifths of its seven-year goal. Japan has also been the largest donor to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) since 1986.

Furthermore, regarding support for women, at the Fourth World Women's Conference held in 1995, Japan announced its "Women in Development (WID) Initiative." In this WID initiative, Japan pledged to step up efforts to increase its development assistance in the field of WID, particularly in three priority areas-(i) education, (ii) health, and (iii) participation by women in socioeconomic activities-in order to improve women's social status and rectify gender inequality. Specifically, Japan will implement projects that will contribute to gender equality, such as the construction of vocational training facilities mainly for women, vocational training, literacy education, and support for maternal and child health. Furthermore, experts in survey and planning from the viewpoint of gender-WID have joined project formulation missions to hear opinions from residents of the areas that will receive Japan's assistance so that the government concerned can take into consideration the participation and benefits of women when formulating and implementing projects.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan recognizes the importance of the grassroots activities which Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) are carrying out in fields where governments and international organizations are not always able to deliver adequate services. The relationship between governments, international organizations and NGOs in these fields is a complementary one. Japan has intensified its support for grassroots projects conducted by NGOs in its bilateral cooperation in the field of population support which includes enhancing dialogues with

**NGOs from the stage of project formulation onward. Establishing this kind of partnership with NGOs is also important from a multilateral context.**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**I would like to touch upon the efforts that Japan has made in addressing population issues that have arisen in Japan itself. Shortly after the Second World War, Japan underwent rapid population growth due to the baby boom as in other parts of the world. In solving our population problems that developed after the War, grassroots campaigns to diffuse knowledge about family planning conducted by NGOs, nurses and midwives played an important role. A significant contribution was also made by improvements, which were initiated even before the War, in the education of both genders and in the primary health care available to mothers and children. These basic activities, along with improvements in living standards, are essential for resolving population issues. Furthermore, Japan has continued to contribute vigorously to the international community, mainly through activities in its areas of strength such as the economic and social fields.**

**Japan has been undertaking a variety of measures to enhance activities in the area of reproductive health. It provides equal educational opportunities to both genders, The health care system protects and fosters the health of mothers and children by distributing a Maternal and Child Health Handbook, to women upon their pregnancy with the opportunity to receive counselling and guidance about pregnancy, childbirth, and child care. These measures enable women to make their own choices and decisions based on accurate information, and along with the improvements in the conduct of men, have brought about a decline in the rates of infant and child mortality.**

**In the coming years, Japan, like many of the developed countries, must deal with a rapidly aging population and the trend toward fewer children. According to the new future population projections prepared in 1997 by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research in Japan, it is predicted that the proportion of the population above 65 years of age in Japan, will reach the 25 percent level in 2015, and the 32 percent level in 2050, up from the 14.6 percent level in 1995. The aging population and the issue of low fertility rate, which are faced by developed countries and will be faced by developing countries, are an area in which Japan could make full use of its capabilities, to deal with them.**

**In order to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women, in 1996, Japan formulated "The Plan for Gender Equality 2000- A National Plan of Action for the Promotion of a Gender Equal Society by the Year 2000," a plan that reflects the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Based on this national plan of action, all government ministries and agencies have been promoting relevant policies and measures.**

**In concluding, I would like to reiterate Japan's strong commitment to tackling the population problem and its hope for the successful outcome of this Committee meeting.**

**Thank you very much.**