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Statement by H.E. Motohide Yoshikawa
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned

At the Peacebuilding Commission's Annual Session
During the Afternoon Working Session of "Lessons Learned on the Development of
National Capacities and Sustainability of Resources in the Context of U.N. Missions'
Transitions"

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I would like to express my appreciation to Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), who successfully organized its first annual session.

I am also grateful for presentations by Ms. Ameera Haq, Under Secretary-General for the Department of Field Support, Dr. Samura Kamara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sierra Leone, and Mr. Joel Hellman from the World Bank. Following their insightful presentations, I would like to make a few remarks.

As Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, Japan has convened three meetings since January on the challenges of U.N. missions' transitions. I am grateful for the participation by not only the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), but also various U.N. departments and agencies, including the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), the Department of Public Information (DPI), the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

At the meetings of the Working Group, we also heard from three PBC agenda countries facing transitions, namely, Sierra Leone, Burundi and Liberia.

Two challenges have been identified.

The first challenge is how to maintain financial sustainability after the withdrawal of U.N. peace missions. It is crucial to maintain financial support when post-conflict states are moving from a phase of establishing security to a phase of advancing sustainable economic development.

The second challenge is how to continue the engagement between the government and oppositions even after the U.N. peace mission is gone so that the inclusive political process continues. When U.N. missions withdraw, governments and oppositions must be encouraged to continue engagement so the political process does not end. If the political process ends, a relapse into conflict may result forcing us to start all over.

In order to overcome these two challenges, many experts and participants at the meetings of the Working Group on Lessons Learned suggested that host states and the international community agree on shared objectives and create frameworks based on mutual commitments.

Many are in development right now.

Let's take three countries as examples.

The first is Sierra Leone where a U.N. political mission has terminated. In 2009, Sierra Leone and Canada, Chair of the Sierra Leone Configuration, co-hosted a PBC high-level session in which the national agenda called the "Agenda for Change" was endorsed. The outcome of this session was reviewed by the PBC for three years until 2012. Ambassador Guillermo Rishchynski of Canada, as chair of Sierra Leone Configuration, facilitated the process.

This year, a Mutual Accountability Framework was established by the government of Sierra Leone and its partners. The Framework ensures the government of Sierra Leone to commit to fostering inclusive political settlements. In turn, the Framework encourages the international community to maintain financial support for Sierra Leone.

The second example is Burundi. In anticipation of the withdrawal of the U.N. political mission by the end of this year, efforts are being made, 1) to enhance the political dialogue, 2) to conduct elections in an inclusive manner, and 3) to encourage the international community to maintain financial and political support. Ambassador Paul Seger of Switzerland, as Chair of the Burundi Configuration, is working to hold a roundtable to reach a mutual commitment.

The third and the last example is Liberia. Liberia is taking steps to facilitate a smooth transition as the number of peacekeepers has been reduced. The Configuration chair, Ambassador Staffan Tillander of Sweden, has been working with the Liberian government to establish a compact between the government and the international community.

This summary of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, I trust, will be of use in today's discussion and I hope that those involved with the three countries I cited may provide additional inputs.

Thank you.