

Statement by Ambassador Tetsuya Kimura
At the 2021 Annual Session of the UNICEF Executive Board

1 June 2021 (3 mins)

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, Japan would like to appreciate H.E. Ms. Audra Plepytė for her great work and contributions, and to congratulate H.E. Mr. Rytis Paulauskas on your accession as President of the Executive Board. We look forward to working closely with you to support UNICEF under the able leadership of Executive Director Fore.

First, we appreciate UNICEF's critical work on the COVAX Facility toward providing vaccines for all. Japan will co-host the "COVAX AMC Summit" with Gavi tomorrow, aiming to close the financial gap in vaccine procurement through the framework of COVAX AMC and meet the target of delivering up to 1.8 billion doses of safe, effective and quality-assured vaccines to AMC-Eligible economies. In our fight against the Coronavirus, Japan will continue to work closely with UNICEF from the perspective of "Leaving no one's health behind".

Second, the next UNICEF Strategic Plan 2022-2025 must contribute to enhancing resilience and preparedness for the next crisis, and, most importantly, it must maximize the well-being of every child and young person. Children and young people have been deeply impacted by COVID-19. Violence against children is on the rise, and their sense of isolation is increasing. We need to work together as partners to build back better from the pandemic to help children in vulnerable environments. In this connection, Japan will continue to work with UNICEF to achieve universal health coverage. We also look forward to working with UNICEF on preparations for the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit, particularly outreaching to partner countries to encourage them to develop their commitments.

Third, the concept of human security is particularly useful in tackling new challenges and crises caused by COVID-19. The human security approach

can assist UNICEF and Member States in identifying and addressing widespread and cross-cutting challenges to the survival, livelihood, and dignity of individuals, including the most vulnerable children and young people in fragile situations. Japan would like to continue to discuss with UNICEF how to apply this approach to concrete activities on the ground.

Finally, March 11th this year marked ten years since the Great East Japan Earthquake, which took the lives of 15,900 people, with more than 2,500 people still unaccounted for. Disasters can happen at any place, at any time, and can affect anyone. With respect to disaster risk reduction, Japan will work closely with the UN to accelerate the implementation of the Sendai Framework towards its midterm review in 2023. In this regard, I would like to hear from Executive Director Fore on how the element of disaster risk reduction, with a view to protecting and empowering children and young people, will be reflected in UNICEF's next Strategic Plan.

I thank you.