

**Statement by Ambassador YAMANAKA**  
**At the 2023 Second Regular Session of the UNICEF Executive Board**

Item 2 : General Debate

5 September 2023

Thank you, Madam President,

At the outset, Japan appreciates all the efforts taken by UNICEF and its staff, particularly in this difficult time of global crises and challenges. We would like to congratulate Mr. Ted Chaiban on assuming the position of Deputy Executive Director and look forward to working closely with him(you) under the able leadership of Executive Director Russell.

I would like to make three points:

First, the challenges to sustainable development are immense, diverse and intertwined. Many developing countries face several interlinked crises, which have delayed or derailed their efforts to achieve the SDGs and further widened the financing gap. In this regard, as mentioned by Ms. Russell in her opening statement, the SDG Summit later this month will be an extremely important opportunity to accelerate progress on the 2030 Agenda.

Japan strongly believes that the advancement of human security should contribute to realizing sustainable development. We are also of the view that 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, starting with the most vulnerable children and young people in fragile situations. Japan would like to continue to discuss with UNICEF and Member States how to apply this approach to concrete activities on the ground.

Second, I would like to highlight the importance of promoting cooperation in education, particularly after the Transforming Education Summit last year. UNICEF's support for education, especially in conflict-affected countries, is highly appreciated, and we must not forget that education needs to be maintained as much as possible even during conflicts or other dire situations. In this regard, Japan agreed with UNICEF in June to promote access to education and water and sanitation facilities by constructing and renovating schools and improving water and sanitation facilities on school premises in Ethiopia. Japan is grateful for UNICEF's vital work in this field.

Third, we place particular importance on the issue of health. We should redouble our efforts to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) to protect the most vulnerable children and respond effectively to any future crisis. UNICEF's role in this area is more important than ever.

Moreover, based on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring equitable access to medical countermeasures (MCMs), including in developing countries, is recognized as a major global challenge. In this context, the G7 announced the launch of the MCM Delivery Partnership for equitable access (MCDP). We are pleased to see the MCDP moving forward in a concrete way, working closely with UNICEF as one of its key partners. In this connection, we would welcome Ms. Russell's participation in the related side events to be convened during the UN General Assembly this month.

To conclude, Japan looks forward to further cooperating with UNICEF in the endeavor to achieve the 2030 Agenda. We are deeply committed to our close cooperative relationship with UNICEF by actively supporting its activities.

I thank you, Madam President.