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

Thank you, Mr. President,

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates, Good morning,

At the outset, I would like to express Japan’s appreciation to Executive Director Fore for her dedicated work and great contributions during her leadership at UNICEF. Japan would also like to appreciate UNICEF and its staff for their tireless and tenacious efforts to save lives and protect the rights of children, particularly in this difficult time of global challenges caused by COVID-19.

Japan welcomes the draft of the new Strategic Plan, which has been finalized by reflecting the constructive comments proposed by various member states and stakeholders. Japan also appreciates that the Strategic Plan charts a course towards inclusive recovery from COVID-19 and incorporates several elements to which we attach particular importance, such as the concept of human security, promotion of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and humanitarian and development nexus. We look forward to the adoption of the Strategic Plan in this regular session.

The new Strategic Plan also shows a direction towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In July, we presented our domestic and international efforts to achieve the SDGs in our second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High-Level Political Forum. In this VNR, our Foreign Minister, Mr. MOTEGI, mentioned that the SDGs have become a booming topic among the younger generations who will shoulder the future. We are looking forward to further cooperating with UNICEF in the endeavor to achieve long-term results in the five interconnected goal areas set by the new Strategic Plan.
Now, let me touch upon the unfolding human security crisis in Afghanistan, which is a huge concern to all of us. Japan is determined to continue to work closely with UNICEF and other agencies to mitigate the ongoing humanitarian crisis in the region and to protect the rights of vulnerable groups, including children, young people, and women. While it is important to identify what UNICEF as an individual UN agency can do, I would like to emphasize that it is also necessary to discuss what kind of support the United Nations as a whole can provide under the current situation, taking into account both the humanitarian and the development needs on the ground.

Finally, the Government of Japan will host the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 from 7th to 8th December. UNICEF has kindly been supporting us as a member of a virtual secretariat of the Summit. The Summit will focus on the critical roles of food, health, and social protection systems in delivering good nutrition for all. Through pursuing synergy with the UN Food Systems Summit in September, we will continue to build momentum for international efforts to address the critical issue of nutrition.

I thank you.