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| **Statement for the 2019 Global Platform for DRR**  **by the Japan Women’s Network for Disaster Risk Reduction (JWNDRR)** |

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Yumiko TANAKA,

Vice-President, Japan Women’s Network for Disaster Risk Reduction (JWNDRR)

Your Excellences, DRR and gender experts, ladies and gentlemen:

It is my great honor and privilege to be invited here to deliver the statement at the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction: the Sixth Session on Resilience Divided: Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Societies, organized by the UNDRR together with international agencies, governments and civil society organizations.

I am pleased to inform you that a large number of local women’s groups were formed in Japan after the massive earthquake and subsequent tsunami struck Tohoku, the northeast coast of Japan’s main island, in March 2011. Women lost their children and families, but they had no time to mourn as they had to serve for the evacuees and survivors at emergency shelters by preparing meals and taking care of children, the elderly, persons with disabilities and sick persons. At the same time, new women’s groups were formed to assist with each other for delivering specific items needed by women and elderly, creating safe space for women and girls, finding out alternative livelihood to support their families, establishing hotlines and counselling centers for domestic and sexual violence, and giving women a voice in recovery and reconstruction decision-making processes.

The Japan Women’s Network for Disaster Risk Reduction(JWMDRR), to which I represent today, was formed by a strong initiative by the former governor of Chiba prefecture, Ms. Akiko Domoto, and her friends, immediately after the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake. Their main objective was to develop networks among these local women’s groups in Tohoku, northeastern part of Japan,　as well as to form a broad-based nation-wide network of women’s groups, gender-equality promotion centers and government agencies concerned, in order to promote gender-responsive DRR legislation, plans and programs, with special emphasis on reconstruction, at both national and local government levels. We also wanted the experiences and lessons learnt from previous disasters, such as Kobe and Niigata earthquakes, to be shared with women in Tohoku, as well as to consolidate the lessons learnt from Tohoku to be shared widely for the preparation for future disasters. Now the Women’s Network has members of more than 150 women groups and 1,000 individuals, and forms also a part of Japan CSO Coalition for DRR (JCC-DRR).

We made specific policy proposals from a gender and diversity perspective as a member of Women Major Group at the time of formulating the Sendai Framework for DRR in 2015. We have been active, in particular, to advocate the Government of Japan for revising DRR policies and mechanisms from a gender and diversity perspective. As a result, the share of women’ representation at the local disaster management councils has been improved. Now we are lobbying for updating the Gender Guidelines for DRR developed by the Cabinet Office back in 2013.

To effectively and meaningfully meet the objectives of Sendai Framework from a gender and inclusive perspective, we have organized a series of seminars and workshops with various partners, such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), UN Women, the World Bank, the private sectors, and CSOs. We have been also conducting studies and researches on reconstruction efforts in Japan from a gender and diversity perspective in collaboration with the University of Tokyo, Women and Health Network, Japan, and most recently with the University of California. In February this year, we took part in publishing a report on DRR local policies from a gender perspective, based upon the follow-up surveys undertaken for about 1200 local government bodies. We have been also conducting case studies on the challenges that women faced during the aftermath of Tohoku disasters and the ways for them to be actively involved in decision-making processes on DRR, in particular in the collective relocation and management retreat processes.

Mr./Mme. Chairperson, I am pleased to announce that our paper consolidating these findings is to be included in the UNDRR’s Global Assessment Report(GAR) of 2019.

Through all these efforts, we are now, more than ever, convinced that gender-responsive consensus-building and dialogic democratic processes are crucial in DRR efforts at all stages of disaster preparedness, response, recovery, reconstruction and mitigation. We have found several successful cases where reconstruction processes and town planning turned out to be more sustainable and made local community disaster resilient, with women’s and diverse groups being actively involved.

Mr./Mme. Chairperson, we still have to overcome the remaining challenges, therefore would like to propose the following actions:

1. Governments and international communities should make strenuous efforts to further improve the collection of disaster-related data by sex, age, disabilities and other social attributes. Such statistics are critical to develop effective and inclusive DRR policies.
2. Governments and international communities should provide more funding to promote capacity building of women’s leadership for DRR at all levels, as well as to make a quota and/or *parite* provisions for gender equal participation. It is crucial for women to play the leading roles in DRR at global, national and local levels.
3. We should further enhance the roles of women CSOs in DRR, in particular with providing more fund with regional Gender Stakeholder Groups and global Women Major Groups for DRR to be　able to share and learn lessons learnt.

Thank you.

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