

**【Check Against Delivery】**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR RYUTA MIZUUCHI,  
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Japan  
to the OSCE  
Special Permanent Council, OSCE  
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Madam Chair,

Let me join my previous speakers in congratulating Malta and welcoming the address by Dr. Ian Borg, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs and Trade of Malta, on Malta's assuming the OSCE Chairpersonship 2024 in this challenging time. We wish the Chair all the best and success throughout its chairmanship. Recognizing that the security of Europe and the Indo-Pacific are inextricably linked amidst ongoing complex and critical security challenges, Japan, as OSCE's first Partner for Co-operation from Asia, appreciates the role the Chair plays in leading the Organization in bringing the participating states together and upholding the rule-of-law based order in Europe. Japan, therefore, stands ready to work closely with the Chair with a view to recovering the values and confidence that the OSCE has created and built to date and strengthening our partnership between OSCE and Asia.

Madam Chair,

At this juncture, and responding to the Chair's priorities that we fully support, we consider it critically important for us all to reaffirm our unwavering solidarity with Ukraine. In spite of the distance, our Minister for Foreign Affairs delivered Japan's strong message of continuous support to Ukraine for the realization of a just and lasting peace through her physical presence in Ukraine on 7<sup>th</sup> January.

Believing that involvement of both public and private sectors is crucial in peacemaking and in order for the peace to be sustainable, Japan will host the Japan-Ukraine Conference for promotion of Economic Reconstruction on 19<sup>th</sup> February in our quest for unified efforts of both public and private sectors of the international community.

Minister Kamikawa, while she was in Ukraine, also reaffirmed the importance of protecting women and children, the most vulnerable in times of war, and working towards ensuring 'human dignity'. On this basis, with regard to women and youth, which is also a priority for the Chair, we consider it important to respect diversity and inclusiveness by promoting WPS (Women Peace & Security) and YPS (Youth, Peace & Security), which, no doubt, will contribute to strengthening the resilience of the people.

Madam Chair,

As the international community stands at a historic turning point, it has never been more important to strengthen partnerships for a free and open, rule-of-law based international order, with the aim of steering the world towards co-operation rather than division and confrontation. With this in mind, and building on our long-standing partnership, Japan on the part of Asian Partners for Co-operation wishes to reaffirm its commitment to further strengthen cooperations between the Asian Partners and the OSCE through an equal and mutually complementary partnership and augment our solidarity even further within this year.

Let me remind you all that it will be Japan's turn to host this year's Asian Conference. With due preparations in Tokyo, as well as cooperations with the Chair of the Asian Partners, OSCE Chair, OSCE Secretariat and other participating States, we very much hope that the Asian Conference will contribute to upgrading the partnership between Japan, Asia and the OSCE. We welcome your active participation for dialogue in this regard.

Madam Chair,

Japan decided to step up relations with Malta and has opened its Embassy in Sliema this January. We look forward to working closely together here at the OSCE and discussing all issues of relevance under Malta's strong chairmanship.

I thank you.

(End)