

## **General Debate on Gender Equality and Gender-sensitive Parliaments as Drivers of Change for a More Resilient and Peaceful World**

Good afternoon, I am Taro Yamada, member of the Japanese House of Councilors and deputy head of the delegation from Japan.

Japan does not rank highly in some international indices related to gender equality. In 2018 the Japanese government addressed this by passing the Act on Promotion of Gender Equality in the Political Field, and the results of this legislation are beginning to appear.

For example, in the House of Councilors elections in July this year, record numbers of women stood as candidates and more women were elected than ever before.

I am confident women's perspectives will have an ever-increasing influence upon parliamentary activity.

In June this year, Japan passed a children's basic law, which defines the objectives for protecting children's rights, as well as a law to create an Agency for Children and Families. These laws support child-raising and child-development policies across multiple agencies.

To initiate discussion and advocate the importance of such an agency I personally submitted a proposal to the prime minister and established study groups within the Liberal Democratic Party and among my fellow parliamentarians.

There are many issues to be resolved as quickly as possible in order to protect and further the rights of women and children.

My experience of parliamentary activity has made me acutely aware of the importance of gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments.

I will continue to do my best to promote balanced gender equality and child welfare in Japan and around the world.

I will do my best to continue promoting balanced gender equality that is aligned to Japanese social and cultural context, for example by ensuring that we do not sacrifice our freedom of expression.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak at such a globally important conference.

I look forward to exchanging ideas and best practices with all of you during and even after the 145th IPU Assembly.

Thank you.