

**MISSION PERMANENTE DU JAPON**

AUPRÈS DES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES  
GENÈVE-SUISSE

MT/UN/596

The Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and has the honour to transmit herewith the response from the Government of Japan to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures ref: OL JPN 1/2016 dated 10 March 2016.

The Permanent Mission of Japan to International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights the assurances of its highest consideration.

Geneva, 27 December 2016

Enclosure mentioned



**Response to the Joint Communication from Special Procedures by the  
Government of Japan**

Additional information in response to the allegations made in the Joint Communication
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1. After intensive consultations between the Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) on the issue of comfort women toward an early conclusion, the Foreign Ministers of both nations had a meeting on December 28, 2015, and announced the content of the agreement at a joint press conference (see attached). Later on the same day, a phone call between the leaders of both nations was held and the leaders confirmed that both sides had reached an agreement. In accordance with the agreement, on July 28, 2016, the Government of the ROK established a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women, and the Government of Japan contributed 1 billion yen to the foundation on August 31 of the same year. The Governments of Japan and the ROK will cooperate and continue to faithfully implement the agreement, particularly for the former comfort women who are now advanced in years.
2. The Government of Japan has sincerely dealt with issues of reparations, property and claims pertaining to the Second World War under the San Francisco Peace Treaty, which the Government of Japan concluded with 45 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom and France, and through bilateral treaties, agreements and instruments. The issues of claims of individuals, including the comfort women issue, have been legally settled with the parties to these treaties, agreements and instruments.
3. Furthermore, the Government of Japan extended maximum cooperation to the Asian Women's Fund (AWF), which implemented "medical and welfare support projects" and provided "atonement money" (for a total of 5 million yen per person in the ROK and Taiwan, 3.2 million yen in the Philippines) to offer realistic relief to former comfort women who are now advanced in years. When the atonement money as well as the medical and welfare support were provided, the then-Prime Ministers (namely, PM Ryutaro Hashimoto, PM Keizo Obuchi, PM Yoshiro Mori and PM Junichiro Koizumi), sent a signed letter expressing apologies and remorse directly to each former comfort woman (see attached).
4. The Government of Japan has been sincerely dealing with this issue through

measures such as the Asian Women's Fund. In accordance with the said agreement between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK, on July 28, 2016, the Government of the ROK established a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women. Against this backdrop, on August 31 of the same year, the Government of Japan contributed 1 billion yen to the foundation.

5. Currently, both Governments are cooperatively making the utmost efforts to implement the agreement, particularly for the former comfort women who are now advanced in years. The agreement achieved through considerable diplomatic efforts by the two Governments has not only been welcomed by the international community, including Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations, but has also been positively received by many former comfort women. From the perspective of recovering the honor and dignity and healing the psychological wounds of the former comfort women, it would be very much appreciated if the UN would observe the implementation of the agreement, which is the result of considerable diplomatic efforts by the two Governments.
6. The expression "sex slave" contradicts the facts and is therefore inappropriate. The expression "sex slave" does not appear in the agreement between Japan and the ROK either.
7. Foreign Minister Yun of the Government of the ROK stated that "the Government of the ROK acknowledges the fact that the Government of Japan is concerned about the statue built in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul from the viewpoint of preventing any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity, and will strive to solve this issues in an appropriate manner" in the agreement on December 28, 2015. The Government of Japan believes that the steady implementation of the agreement is of the utmost importance. As stated above, it would be very much appreciated if the UN would observe the implementation of the agreement.
8. With regards to education, it is required in the Guidelines for the Course of Study, which provides, under the law, the standards for the design of the school curriculum, that students should be taught to understand that World War II caused tremendous suffering to humanity at large. What is to be described in textbooks based on the Guidelines for the Course of Study is left to the discretion of each textbook publisher, and some textbooks do mention comfort women.

The legal status of the agreement made between Japan and the ROK and how the agreement will be enforced in law and practice.

9. After intensive consultations between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK on the issue of comfort women toward an early conclusion, the Foreign Ministers of both nations had a meeting on December 28, 2015, and announced the content of the agreement at a joint press conference (see attached). The agreement is not a treaty, but nonetheless, the two Foreign Ministers made a clear statement not only to their citizens but to the world, and later on the same day, the leaders of Japan and the ROK confirmed that both sides had reached an agreement, making the agreement a commitment at the highest level.

10. The Governments of Japan and the ROK will cooperate and continue to faithfully implement the agreement, particularly for the former comfort women who are now advanced in years. From this perspective, the Government of Japan contributed 1 billion yen to the foundation on August 31, 2016, for providing support for the former comfort women.

Detailed information on the actions that will be taken to ensure that the measures taken to address the human rights violations committed by the State in relation to the so-called “comfort women” comply with international human rights norms and standards; detailed information on how the Government will implement international human rights mechanisms’ recommendations; information on steps taken to address the concerns mentioned.

11. The Government of Japan has been explaining its responses to the international human rights mechanisms’ recommendations in accordance with the due process of each mechanism. With that said, the Government of Japan believes that the steady implementation of the agreement is of the utmost importance. From this perspective, the Government of Japan contributed 1 billion yen to the foundation on August 31, 2016, for providing support for the former comfort women.

Detailed information on the measures taken to ensure the meaningful participation of the women victims and the associations representing them in the preparation, drafting and adoption of the agreement

12. The agreement is the result of intensive consultations between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK as well as considerable diplomatic efforts for an early conclusion of the issue on comfort women. The Government of Japan refrains from explaining the details of the consultations during the process toward the agreement. Nonetheless, on July 28, 2016, the Government of the ROK established a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women, and on August 31 of the same year, the Government of Japan contributed 1 billion yen to the foundation. The Governments of Japan and the ROK will cooperate and continue to faithfully implement the agreement, particularly for the former comfort women who are now advanced in years.

Attachment 1

(Provisional translation)

Announcement by Foreign Ministers of Japan and the Republic of Korea at the Joint Press Occasion

1. Foreign Minister Kishida

The Government of Japan and the Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between Japan and the ROK at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of Japan, state the following:

(1) The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women, and the Government of Japan is painfully aware of responsibilities from this perspective.

As Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Abe expresses anew his most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

(2) The Government of Japan has been sincerely dealing with this issue. Building on such experience, the Government of Japan will now take measures to heal psychological wounds of all former comfort women through its budget. To be more specific, it has been decided that the Government of the ROK establish a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women, that its funds be contributed by the Government of Japan as a one-time contribution through its budget, and that projects for recovering the honor and dignity and healing the psychological wounds of all former comfort women be carried out under the cooperation between the Government of Japan and the Government of the ROK.

(3) While stating the above, the Government of Japan confirms that this issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government will steadily implement the measures specified in (2) above.

In addition, together with the Government of the ROK, the Government of Japan will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations.

## 2. Foreign Minister Yun

The Government of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the Government of Japan have intensively discussed the issue of comfort women between the ROK and Japan at bilateral meetings including the Director-General consultations. Based on the result of such discussions, I, on behalf of the Government of the ROK, state the following:

(1) The Government of the ROK values the GOJ's announcement and efforts made by the Government of Japan in the lead-up to the issuance of the announcement and confirms, together with the GOJ, that the issue is resolved finally and irreversibly with this announcement, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures specified in 1. (2) above. The Government of the ROK will cooperate in the implementation of the Government of Japan's measures.

(2) The Government of the ROK acknowledges the fact that the Government of Japan is concerned about the statue built in front of the Embassy of Japan in Seoul from the viewpoint of preventing any disturbance of the peace of the mission or impairment of its dignity, and will strive to solve this issue in an appropriate manner through taking measures such as consulting with related organizations about possible ways of addressing this issue.

(3) The Government of the ROK, together with the Government of Japan, will refrain from accusing or criticizing each other regarding this issue in the international community, including at the United Nations, on the premise that the Government of Japan will steadily implement the measures it announced.

Attachment 2

(Translation)

Letter from Prime Minister to the former comfort women

Dear Madam,

On the occasion that the Asian Women's Fund, in cooperation with the Government and the people of Japan, offers atonement from the Japanese people to the former wartime comfort women, I wish to express my feelings as well.

The issue of comfort women, with an involvement of the Japanese military authorities at that time, was a grave affront to the honor and dignity of large numbers of women.

As Prime Minister of Japan, I thus extend anew my most sincere apologies and remorse to all the women who underwent immeasurable and painful experiences and suffered incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women.

We must not evade the weight of the past, nor should we evade our responsibilities for the future.

I believe that our country, painfully aware of its moral responsibility, with feelings of apology and remorse, should face up squarely to its past history and accurately convey it to future generations.

Furthermore, Japan also should take an active part in dealing with violence and other forms of injustice to the honor and dignity of women.

Finally, I pray from the bottom of my heart that each of you will find peace for the rest of your lives.

Respectfully yours,

Prime Minister of Japan