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**Statement by H.E. Mr. Yukio Takasu
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At the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on
and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and
Other Matters Related to the Security Council
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Mr. President,

I would like to thank you for convening this meeting today. I also commend the four Vice-Chairpersons for their efforts to produce the report to the President.

As I stated earlier in this forum, Japan's basic position on Security Council reform remains that it must be realized through changes in the composition, including expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent categories. I believe I do not need to elaborate further on this position today. So let me focus on how we, the Member States, can move the process forward to so that we can enter into intergovernmental negotiations. Once those negotiations are launched, Japan will participate in a flexible manner, with a view to achieving meaningful reform.

Mr. President,

I recall once again General Assembly decision 61/561, which governs our work during this session. In it, we agreed that our common goal was to achieve further concrete results in the Security Council reform process within the current session of the General Assembly. Japan maintains that, for that goal to be realized, we must enter into intergovernmental negotiations at the earliest possible date. And it is now nine months since the decision was adopted unanimously, but regrettably we have not yet been able to launch the negotiations.

I was therefore encouraged to learn from the report that it continues to be the common understanding of Member States that the Security Council in its current composition does not reflect international reality, and that the status quo on its composition is judged as unrealistic. It was also encouraging to learn that all of the Member States the Vice-Chairpersons consulted voiced a desire to enter into intergovernmental negotiations. The report clearly demonstrates that the efforts to

clarify the positions of Member States through consultations have been exhausted and simply continuing further consultations will not bring us any closer to negotiations. The report states that moving the process forward requires only the political willingness to compromise by engaging in intergovernmental negotiations. I trust many delegations here today will reiterate their determination to enter into intergovernmental negotiations as soon as possible.

Some may ask, "On what basis should we conduct negotiations?" Despite various efforts to date, we do not have a single agreed text as a basis for negotiations. Yet this absence of a single negotiation text at this stage should not be construed as a sign that we lack a basis for launching negotiations. The guiding principle of our work is that we should build on the progress achieved so far as well as the positions of and proposals made by Member States. We would like to express our appreciation to the members of the Task Force for their tireless efforts to clarify the views and positions of Member States. Their efforts culminated in this report, which clearly brings together the progress that has been achieved so far and comprehensively sets out the positions of and proposals made by Member States, listing specific options for moving forward with reform. It is not productive to point out any shortcomings we may find in the report. Rather, with the report before us and building upon it, I believe we can seize the opportunity to launch intergovernmental negotiations.

As far as the substance of the reform is concerned, no country will be able to set aside its principled position before negotiation begins. All principled positions of Member States must be on the table for consideration at this stage. Only after the start of negotiations, where the real give-and-take takes place and eventually a negotiation text will emerge, can Member States demonstrate the flexibility that will make it possible to reap the fruits of the negotiations and achieve meaningful reform.

With regard to the modality of intergovernmental negotiations, they should basically take place at the General Assembly plenary, which is open, transparent, and inclusive. Thus I fully share the view of the Vice-Chairpersons expressed in the report that the General Assembly, being sovereign, may decide to shift the consideration of the reform process to the GA plenary.

In order to achieve concrete results within the current session of the General Assembly, we must act now. I trust, Mr. President, you will listen to the many Member States that feel strongly we should now begin intergovernmental negotiations. And I respectfully request you to exercise the leadership and take the necessary steps that guide us to launch the negotiations as soon as possible, so that we will be able to complete the long-overdue task of reforming the Security Council.