

At the UN's annual meeting held on March 19, Ambassador Maruyama made the following remark as the representative of one of the major donor countries:

With regard to the fight against COVID-19, Japan commends the efforts of the United Nations organization. The UN was the first to call for urgent assistance to South Africa, in April last year.

Japan responded quickly to the appeal of the UN, because COVID-19 is more than a health crisis, it is a humanitarian crisis, a challenge to human security.

COVID-19 is threatening not only human life, but through the social and economic impact, also people's dignity and wellbeing.

An inclusive response based on the idea of human security, focusing on individual protection and empowerment, is vital in order to prevent the most vulnerable people from being left behind.

Japan responded to this requirement by funding projects of both the UNDP and UN Women.

The government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme share a strong partnership bond that is driven by their mutual goal of ending poverty, inequality, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure a more prosperous and fairer world.

One of the two projects with the UNDP was intended to immediately respond to the pandemic and was used for the provision of PPEs, supporting affected SMEs and informal businesses, and strengthening coordination capacity, among other activities.

The second project focus on medium- and long-term recovery through the support of TVET colleges to train students to take advantage of emerging job opportunities in the automotive industry.

In doing so, Japan and the UNDP wish to respond to what President Ramaphosa mentioned as important for SA at his SONA this year.

The partnership between Japan and UN Women has become stronger and stronger over the past years.

Japan has a solid interest to help realize human security in the field. Without eradicating the challenges faced by women and girls, this goal will never be reached.

The project with UN Women was intended to help the most vulnerable, who bravely deal with daily challenges.

They are women in the informal sector, women suffering from Gender Based Violence, and women with HIV/AIDS.

COVID-19 has reminded us of the harsh realities that many women and girls have to face on a global scale.

Japan is resolved to strengthen its partnership with UN Women to make a better society, with empowered women, in the era of post-COVID-19.

Japan will continue to cooperate with UN organizations in South Africa, to cope with the impact of COVID-19 and to bring a resilient recovery in this country.