

**Statement by Mr. Hirotaka Ishihara,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
High-level Segment of the 25th Session of
the UN Human Rights Council
March 3, 2014, Geneva**

Mr. President,
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to pay tribute to His Excellency Ambassador Ndong Ella for his outstanding leadership as President of the Human Rights Council, and the various efforts undertaken across the world by the OHCHR.

Mr. President,

First, I would like to echo some of the previous speakers, who mentioned the situation in the Crimean Peninsula in Ukraine. Japan expresses grave anxiety and concern over the situation. Japan strongly expects that the situation in Ukraine will be settled in a peaceful manner and strongly urges all the parties

concerned to behave with maximum self-restraint and responsibility, to fully observe the relevant international laws and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine.

Mr. President,

Despite those efforts by the HRC and the OHCHR mentioned at the outset, there remain various human rights challenges around the world. One of the most well-known situations requiring urgent action by the Human Rights Council and the international community is the systematic, widespread and grave violations of human rights in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. Recently, a report by the United Nations Commission of Inquiry (COI) on human rights in the DPRK was published. The personal and direct testimonies and urgent and emotional appeals from North Korean defectors as well as victims of abduction and their families recorded in the report shed light on the crucial human rights abuses existing in the DPRK. The continued existence of such violations in the 21st century can only be described as deeply shocking. The COI report finds that human rights violations, including those in political prison camps as well as abductions, constitute crimes against humanity and calls for resolute action by the international community.

Japan has fully cooperated with the COI and highly appreciates its work. As COI Chair Justice Michael Kirby stated, the outcome of the COI should not end with a simple report. Yet the DPRK has not given serious consideration to the work of the Human Rights Council, not permitting the COI to enter its territory but rather remaining uncooperative. I strongly hope that the DPRK will take sincere and immediate action.

Thus far, the international community has repeatedly reiterated its concerns over the terrible situation in the DPRK, including the abduction issue. In the Council session last March, Japan jointly submitted with the EU a resolution on the human rights situation in the DPRK, which requested the establishment of a COI. The resolution enjoyed broad support from the international community and was adopted by consensus. This represents the determined will of the international community that the serious human rights situation in the DPRK be addressed without delay. Yet the DPRK has failed to sincerely address the issues, including abductions, which also constitute a violation of Japan's sovereignty.

In this session Japan will submit jointly with the EU a resolution on the DPRK. The resolution will establish a mechanism to steadily follow up on the COI report. Broad support for the resolution will send a strong message to the DPRK. I ask for

your support.

Mr. President,

Deplorable human rights violations also continue in Syria as the situation gets worse. The violence must stop now, through political dialogues. Japan will continue the diplomatic efforts to this end, together with the Council and the international community.

In some parts of Africa, conflicts and violence continue to pose mounting human rights challenges. At the 5th meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development or TICAD V last June, Japan expressed its intention to provide support with a focus on human security, aiming to protect human rights and the dignity of individuals against various threats. Meanwhile, we are paying particular attention to the human rights situations rapidly getting worse in South Sudan and the Central African Republic. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe just announced on his latest visit to Ethiopia that Japan is ready to provide about three hundred and twenty million USD to address conflict and disasters in Africa, including for those nations.

Mr. President,

Women account for half of humankind. Hence, the promotion of the rights of women is crucial for this Council. As Prime Minister Abe expressed at the United Nations General Assembly last year, Japan actively addresses international issues concerning women and make efforts to build “a society in which women shine”. Japan supports the activities of the UN Women and acts to live up to its reputation as one of the major contributors. Japan also cooperates with relevant international organizations, including the office of Ms. Zainab Hawa Bangura, Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, who visited Japan last year.

Women are often vulnerable during times of natural disaster. It is in this spirit that Japan will resubmit a resolution stressing the need for increased consideration for women during times of natural disaster in the meeting of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) next week in New York. This resolution reflects the deep thoughts of the Japanese citizens who experienced a major disaster three years ago. I hope that the resolution will enjoy support in the meeting next week, where I will be present.

Mr. President,

The UPR is a meaningful system within the Council, functioning to improve the human rights situations of all UN Member States through dialogues. Japan has fully cooperated with the UPR as well as Special Procedures. It is important for the countries concerned to cooperate with Special Procedures and maintain dialogues with the OHCHR so that the Council can hold constructive discussions free from confrontation.

Human rights treaties play a critical role in improving the human rights situation of each Member State. Japan has been steadily implementing its obligations under treaties, including the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which Japan ratified this year. Japan will continue to promote and protect human rights by engaging itself in the reviews appropriately and responding to recommendations by the treaty bodies as well as to voices from the international community.

Mr. President,

Japan advances its diplomacy focusing on universal values such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law. In doing so, Japan is working more actively than ever in human rights areas, including through technical assistance and capacity building with the aim of improving the global human rights and humanitarian situation. Japan attaches particular

importance to the capacity building of women and the protection and promotion of their rights.

There is no end point to the work of protecting and promoting human rights. The task for this Council is overwhelming. Therefore we must continue to seek how the Council can appropriately address critical issues, while taking into account the need for efficient management of its work and use of financial resources. Japan will actively contribute to the work of the Council as a Council member. I hope that the current session reaffirms its capacity to take action to further promote and protect human rights worldwide.

Thank you for your kind attention.