

Statement by Mr. Masakazu Hamachi,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
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Mr. President,
Mr. High Commissioner for Human Rights,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

It is an honor for me to have the opportunity to speak at the Human Rights Council on behalf of my Government.

Firstly, I would like to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Choi on assuming the Presidency of the Council. As grave violations of human rights continue to occur, the Human Rights Council has numerous tasks at hand. We hope that the Council, under the leadership of the President, will be able to concentrate in an efficient and effective manner on the issues that require its attention. “Human security”, in other words, the freedom of each and every individual from fear and want, and cooperation to ensure that people can live with dignity is one of the pillars of Japan’s foreign policy. Japan collaborates with the international community for the promotion of human rights based on this principle of “human security”.

We also commend the work carried out by Prince Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. Japan firmly believes in the role carried out by the Human Rights Council and the OHCHR in the protection of human rights, and will continue to cooperate actively with them.

Mr. President,

All over the world there are grave human rights situations that require the attention of the Human Rights Council and the OHCHR.

Terrorist attacks are occurring frequently in the world. Japan strongly condemns acts of terrorism, which take the lives of innocent citizens. Such acts pose a challenge to fundamental values such as peace, prosperity and human rights. To

prevent terrorism, it is vital that the international community confront the issue together.

In the Middle East, in particular in Syria, the crisis and the rise of extremism have continued for over five years. The crisis could become a hotbed of serious human rights violations. Japan is strongly concerned about the continuation of the crisis in Syria, and will continue to exert maximum diplomatic effort, in coordination with the international community including the Human Rights Council and the UN Security Council, in order to bring a halt to the violence through political dialogue. In Iraq, as the fight against terrorism develops, more people are becoming internally displaced. At the same time, we need to allow displaced persons to return to their homeland after it has been freed of terrorism. There is a growing demand for stability. Japan will examine what these needs are, and will provide appropriate aid in collaboration with international organizations.

To strengthen counter-terrorism measures, Japan will continue supporting countries concerned for their development of legal frameworks, building of law enforcement capacity and strengthening of border security. Based on the philosophy of “the best way is to go in the middle,” Japan will assist the creation of societies resilient to radicalization. I strongly hope that the Middle East will restore a tolerant and stable society through these efforts.

As the violence in the Middle East and Africa continues to escalate, the international community must respond in an effective and efficient manner to the refugee problem. Today, there are over 60 million refugees and internally displaced persons. This is the largest figure since the end of World War II. The prolonged period of evacuation is another problem.

In order to promote human security, the guiding principle of Japan’s international cooperation, Japan has actively extended assistance to refugees in cooperation with international organizations including the UNHCR and the IOM. Japan promotes humanitarian development collaboration to offer Syrian people hope for their future and alleviate the burden on the host countries. In particular, Japan implements vocational training for refugees, including women and young people who are important actors in development, as well as assists communities hosting refugees for a prolonged period of time.

Mr. President,

The international community has continued to express serious concern over the human rights situation in North Korea. The final report of the Commission of Inquiry submitted in 2014 concluded that the human rights violations including the abductions issue constitute crimes against humanity. The fact that the Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the DPRK was adopted with wide support of the international community at the UN General Assembly in 2015, along with the fact that the “situation in the DPRK” including the human rights situation was discussed at the UN Security Council for the second consecutive year, exemplifies the strong concern of the international community. We strongly urge North Korea to sincerely heed the concerns of the international community and take concrete steps to improve its human rights situations, including through the early resolution of the abductions issue.

Japan, along with the EU, will be submitting a Resolution on the Human Rights Situation in the DPRK at this session. We ask for your understanding and support, so that the resolution will serve as a strong message of the international community towards North Korea.

Mr. President,

Japan has proactively contributed to enhancing human rights in various fields and is determined to continue to do so.

Japan has been working actively in promoting gender equality in order to achieve “a society where women shine”. Japan’s contribution to UN Women has multiplied 60 times since the establishment of UN Women in 2011. Through the UN Women Japan Liaison Office which opened last year in April, Japan has also been strengthening its coordination with the organization. We will once again be hosting the World Assembly for Women, WAW! 2016.

In Africa, there are various human rights and humanitarian challenges that must be addressed, which arise from conflicts, violence and disasters that take place in the region. In August this year, Japan will hold TICAD VI for the first time in Africa in Kenya, co-organized by the UN, the African Union Commission, UNDP and the World Bank. The fundamental principles of TICAD are African “ownership”, and

international “partnership”. Through the dialogue at the summit level, Japan will walk in tandem with Africa towards further development, including the improvement of the human rights situation, of the region.

Japan is also actively engaged in the promotion of rights of persons with disabilities. Japan is working towards the realization of a truly inclusive society by 2020 to welcome you for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games. Japan also sends disabled persons abroad as experts in order to support the empowerment of disabled persons in developing countries through vocational training. I would also like to mention that Japan, as part of its international contribution in this area, has nominated Professor Jun Ishikawa, an expert in assistive technology, for the 2016 elections for the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We ask for the wide support of the international community.

Japan has also taken the initiative in efforts to eliminate discrimination against persons affected by leprosy. Leprosy is a curable disease. Nonetheless, there still exist problems surrounding Leprosy such as dishonor, discrimination and marginalization from society. Japan calls out to the member States to cooperate with the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee regarding the follow-up to the resolution on the elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy. Japan will continue to work hard towards a world without discrimination against Leprosy.

Mr. President,

This year marks the 60th anniversary of Japan’s membership of the United Nations. Japan has attached great importance to universal values such as freedom, democracy, fundamental human rights and the rule of law. It has also actively contributed to the protection and promotion of human rights in the international community. Nonetheless, there still remain numerous issues such as terrorism, the refugee crisis and serious human rights violations in conflicts. Japan will continue to strengthen its relationship with the UN, including the Human Rights Council. As we preside over the G7, as well as assume our role as non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, Japan will fulfill its leadership role to promote and protect human rights in the world at the UN.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.