

**Consideration of the Tenth and Eleventh Combined Periodic Report by  
the Government of Japan under Article 9 of the International  
Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination  
Opening Statement**

August 16, 2018

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Members of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, let me make my opening remarks on behalf of the Japanese delegation at the beginning of the consideration by the Committee on the Tenth and Eleventh Combined Periodic Report by the Government of Japan under Article 9 of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

I would like to express my respect for the Committee's tireless efforts towards the noble goal of the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination. It is my great honor to have an opportunity to engage in a constructive dialogue with the CERD.

It was 99 years ago when the international community, with the active participation of Japan, took the initial step to tackle the issue of racial discrimination at the Paris Peace Conference.

After the tragedy of World War II, the UN Charter of 1945 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 carried forward such spirit. In 1969, after 50 years of such efforts, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, finally came into effect.

Japan has consistently placed importance on fundamental values such as democracy, freedom, human rights, and the rule of law, for more than 70 years since the end of World War II. Japan has continued its efforts for protection of and improvement in human rights situations at home and abroad. As we mark this consideration, we engage while having in our hearts the ideal proposed by our forefathers nearly a century ago, as well as our reflection on World War II more than 70 years ago. The Government of Japan would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our determination to cooperate with the international community, including the United Nations,

and with civil society, for making continued contributions to protection and promotion of human rights for all people.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Members of the CERD, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also take this opportunity to demonstrate Japan's recent efforts, which we also highlighted in our Government's Periodic Report.

First, as the issue of hate speech is attracting growing attention in Japanese society, the Act on the Promotion of Efforts to Eliminate Unfair Discriminatory Speech and Behavior against Persons Originating from Outside Japan (Hate Speech Elimination Act) was enforced in June 2016 in order to address the issue. The Act declares that unfair discriminatory speech and behavior against persons originating from outside Japan will not be tolerated. It was enacted to foster awareness among the general public, to promote their understanding and cooperation through further human rights education and awareness-raising activities, and to bolster efforts for eliminating unfair discriminatory speech and behavior.

It also aims to formulate fundamental principles, clarify responsibilities of the national government, and set out and promote basic measures, in efforts for eliminating such discriminatory speech and behavior. In light of the purport of the Act, the Government of Japan is carrying out actions to eliminate hate speech through such measures as activities to raise awareness of intolerable hate speech, development of a counseling platform for victims, and provision of better access for foreign language speakers to human rights counselling. From the perspective of protecting human rights, the Government of Japan pays close attention to speech and behavior that may evoke a public sense of discrimination. The Government will continue to promote measures to eliminate hate speech in an appropriate manner, through such measures as development of the counseling platform and activities to raise public awareness.

Second, the Government of Japan remains committed to proactively making efforts to formulate a comprehensive policy on the indigenous Ainu people while respecting their human rights.

In particular, the Government is in the process of constructing "Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony," a national center to revive the Ainu culture,

which will be open to the public from April 2020. The Government is playing a central role in developing its main facilities in Shiraoi town, Hokkaido such as the Ainu Museum and the National Park for Ethnic Harmony. The Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony is designed to be a symbol of a society in which we cherish a vibrant, rich and diverse culture that is free of discrimination. It also stands as a symbol of renewing respect for the dignity of the indigenous people of Japan. Indeed, we recognize that it is one of the important long-term national projects.

The Government of Japan will continue to promote policy measures for the promotion of the Ainu culture, and also work to disseminate and raise awareness of the Ainu tradition as well as to improve Ainu people's livelihood.

Let me also highlight the fact that a number of Ministries and Agencies have engaged in the process of preparing this Periodic Report. Moreover, the Government sought opinions from a wide range of members of civil society through the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and held dialogues in public meetings. In addition, the Government of Japan took as much time as possible to hear from those who wished to express their opinions even after the submission of this Report. The Government of Japan recognizes the importance of activities by non-governmental actors aimed at promoting human rights. The Government will continue to attach importance to dialogues with civil society.

Mr. Chairperson, Distinguished Members of the CERD, Ladies and Gentlemen,

There seems to be a stereotype that Japan has an insular and exclusive culture given its nature as an island country. Nevertheless, more and more people from other countries have visited Japan in recent years. In 2010, which was the time of Japan's second consideration, about 8.61 million people came to Japan. The number increased to 13.41 million in 2014, which was the time of the third consideration. In 2017, the number further increased to about 28.69 million. Tourists are warmly welcomed not only in Tokyo but also throughout Japan, and many become frequent visitors. Furthermore, Japanese people are happy with and are cheering for their fellow athletes with diverse origins and backgrounds in sports.

As you may know, Japan will host the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo.

The fundamental principles of the Olympic Charter and Olympism stipulate that "the practice of sport is a human right. Every individual must have the possibility of practicing sport, without discrimination of any kind and in the Olympic spirit."

In compliance with the Olympic Charter, and in light of the spirit of the Constitution of Japan and the Preamble of the Convention, Japan will continue to work tirelessly to contribute to the protection and promotion of human rights, not tolerating any form of discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race or ethnicity.

The Japanese delegation is also ready to provide answers with the utmost sincerity on any matters of concern you may have during this important examination concerning the Convention. It is my hope that we will have fruitful discussions.

Thank you very much for your attention.