

17 July 2023

Mr. President,

Thank you for calling this important meeting. I also thank Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo for the briefing, and welcome the participation of Foreign Minister Kuleba of Ukraine in this meeting.

Mr. President,

I condemn Russia for taking the rest of the world hostage. It is regrettable that Russia chose to terminate the Black Sea Grain Initiative and blames others for the crises it has created by its aggression.

Japan condemns Russia's aggression against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. Russia must immediately and unconditionally withdraw its forces from Ukraine, and respect Ukraine's independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders. Japan will stand with Ukraine as it defends itself for a just and lasting peace.

We should not tolerate the clear violation of the UN Charter. The same applies anywhere in the world. If a permanent member of the Security Council unilaterally attempts to change the status quo of territories of its neighbors by force or coercion, it should be held accountable and face consequences commensurate with their privileges.

## Mr. President,

Russia abuses the veto power. The veto is not for impunity. It should embody heavier responsibilities of the permanent members. In this regard, Japan welcomes the commitment of France, the U.K. and the U.S. to voluntarily refrain from use of the veto. I hope that the remaining permanent members will join them.

Russia is trying to threaten the world with irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, the deployment of nuclear weapons in Belarus and the seizure and militarization of the Zaporizhzhya Nuclear Power Plant. Japan cannot accept Russia's nuclear threats, let alone its use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances.

## Mr. President,

We have to admit that the credibility of this Council is eroding. The Security Council should be reformed to restore the trust of the international community and represent the world of today, not the world of 80 years ago.

I thank you.

(END)

(314 words)