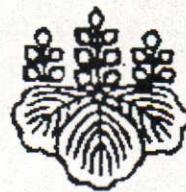


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# ***JAPAN***

*Statement by Prof. Akiko YAMANAKA*

*Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan*

## **Opening Statement**

## **First High-Level Segment of the Human Rights Council**

*Geneva, 19 June 2006*

*Permanent Mission of Japan in Geneva*

**The First High-Level Segment of the Human Rights Council**  
**Statement by Prof. Akiko Yamanaka, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan**  
**(June 19, 18:30, Venue: Geneva)**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. President of the United Nations General Assembly,  
Mr. Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
Madam High Commissioner for Human Rights,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to make a statement on behalf of the Government of Japan at the first session of the newly established Human Rights Council. First of all, Japan would like to extend its heartfelt congratulations to Your Excellency Mr. Luis Alfonso de Alba, the Ambassador of Mexico, on your assumption of the office of chairperson. Japan supports you and looks forward to cooperating with you to make this a successful first session.

Japan also expects that Madame Louise Arbour, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, will play an even more prominent role under the new Human Rights Council in the promotion and protection of human rights all over the world.

Mr. Chairperson,

The mainstreaming of human rights within the United Nations is proceeding irreversibly. The importance of having a “human rights perspective” in all areas was reiterated in the last year’s report by Secretary-General Kofi Annan titled “In larger freedom,” which further stated that “There will be no development without security and no security without development. And both development and security also depend on respect for human rights and the rule of law.” Japan endorses the significance of establishing the Human Rights Council as stated in the report. Japan believes that the Human Rights Council should be based on the past accomplishments of the Commission on Human Rights, assume its strengths and add further values to them. Japan looks forward to contributing actively to the mainstreaming of human rights.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the promotion of human rights, Japan attaches importance to striking a balance both on the “principle” level and on the “implementation” level, and further a “balance between the two. First, at the principle level, Japan endeavours to achieve the promotion and protection of human rights as a universal value and at the same time takes into account the intrinsic situations of each country such as their history and culture. Next, at the implementation level, importance is attached to the “dialogue and cooperation”

approach, but a more effective approach will become necessary when this approach does not function, notably for grave violations of human rights. Finally, while in order to balance those two levels Japan deepens mutual understanding through discussions on the one hand, it will implement concrete cooperation policies on the other. Japan will promote this kind of balanced approach.

Mr. Chairperson,

The newly established Human Rights Council must demonstrate concrete outcomes to the international community for it to meet its expectations. What becomes important then are: "effectiveness," "constructiveness," and "responsiveness." First, effectiveness; the Human Rights Council must quickly reach an agreement on the methods of work and commence substantive activities. Secondly, constructiveness; I believe the Human Rights Council must foster new international cooperation in the human rights field that is founded on mutual understanding. Thirdly, responsiveness; the Human Rights Council must expeditiously and flexibly cope with serious and grave human rights violations. In order to attain these three aims, it is most important for Member States to share responsibility by taking an initiative in setting examples for the promotion and protection of human rights. Member States are expected to disclose their pledge papers, as proposed by Japan, to be appropriately evaluated by a universal periodic review mechanism. Japan hopes that those efforts will make the Human Rights Council an efficient and result-oriented organisation.

Mr. Chairperson,

In the last few decades, the human rights situation in the world has improved significantly and many countries have been democratized. However, we still witness many grave violations of human rights throughout the world. How significant the newly established Human Rights Council proves to be will indeed depend on whether it can pave the way for resolving these grave human rights violations. For instance, there are serious human rights violations in the DPRK. In particular, the DPRK admitted to Japan that it had abducted Japanese citizens. This abduction issue not only remains unresolved for Japan, but also has an international dimension which extends to multiple countries. We intend to actively take up this issue with a view to strengthening international coordination for the resolution of this issue. As part of this effort, Japan actively supports the early adoption of a convention on enforced disappearances. We strongly wish the Human Rights Council to meet the expectations of the international community and produce concrete outcomes as soon as possible. Japan also expects that the DPRK, as a member of the international community, will take responsible steps with full respect for human rights and democracy, thereby foster new international relations and resolve these serious issues through dialogue.

Mr. Chairperson,

In order to crystallize this principle of human rights diplomacy, Japan attaches

importance to “dialogue and cooperation” with partner countries and is actively engaging in multilateral and bilateral technical cooperation. Japan is carrying out ODA with full respect for ownership by developing countries and giving priority to countries that make active efforts to pursue peace, democratisation, and the protection of human rights. For instance, Japan has been assisting with capacity building in judicial and legal systems and with the development of a cooperative network in Asia to combat human trafficking including the commercial sexual exploitation of children. Furthermore, Japan will endeavour to develop international human rights norms including those for new areas covering people with disabilities.

Meanwhile, accompanying the acceleration of globalization in the 21st century are growing threats that cannot be addressed sufficiently through the traditional framework of governance. In this context, Japan is actively promoting the protection and empowerment of each and every individual, in other words, the promotion of “human security,” a concept which embraces all aspects of threats to human lives, livelihoods, and dignity, including human rights. To this end Japan has already contributed approximately 280 million US dollars to the UN Trust Fund for Human Security. This effort is characterized by a bottom-up approach starting from the community level as well as cooperation with the civil society, and is producing concrete outcomes in overcoming of poverty and discrimination as well as the protection and empowerment of vulnerable people including women and children around the world and in other wide-ranging areas.

Mr. Chairperson and Distinguished Delegates,

At this historical turning point of the inauguration of the Human Rights Council, we have gathered here with the common goal to “promote human rights.” It is strongly hoped that with this common goal in mind, the newly established Human Rights Council, through candid dialogue and the spirit of cooperation, will fully meet its expectations and will not cease to be “a ray of hope” for people suffering from grave suppression of human rights around the world. We have a responsibility to do that. Japan is resolved to play a constructive role toward realising a Human Rights Council that functions effectively and is fruitful.

Thank you.