

Check against delivery

Human Rights Council 22nd Session

Statement by Japan at the Consideration of its UPR Report

Geneva, 14 March 2013

Thank you, Mr. President,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Japan, I would like to pay tribute to you, Mr. President, and each of Member States; the High Commissioner; and the many representatives of civil society who all work tirelessly for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

It is my honor to represent Japan and deliver this statement today on the occasion of the adoption by the Council of the outcome report of Japan's second UPR which was held last October.

Japan has been making an active contribution to the activities of the Human Rights Council since its establishment. The Council plays an essential role in the protection and promotion of human rights worldwide. The Universal Periodic Review in particular is a vital mechanism to review the human rights situations of all UN Member

States, through dialogue and cooperation and in an equal manner. In order to make the UPR a more effective system for the improvement of the human rights situations in Member States, it is crucial that each State voluntarily participate in the process. With this in mind, Japan participated in its review process in a forthcoming manner and would like to once again thank all of the Member States for their constructive and valuable comments. Additionally, we would like to express our appreciation to the troika, Bangladesh, Peru, and Libya, for their contribution.

Mr. President,

The Constitution of Japan is based on the fundamental principles of the sovereignty of the people and respect for basic human rights. It states that the fundamental human rights guaranteed to the people by the Constitution "shall be conferred upon the people of this and future generations as eternal and inviolate rights". The Constitution also directly stipulates that "all of the people shall be respected as individuals", expressing the principle of the observation of fundamental human rights.

Based on these constitutional principles, Japan has developed a democratic political system and implements policy which promotes and

protects human rights and fundamental freedoms as universal values. During last year's UPR, Japan received positive feedback from many countries on its efforts to improve its domestic human rights situation. These include measures to improve women's rights through the adoption of the Third Basic Plan for Gender Equality, measures to promote and protect the rights of children and persons with disabilities, human rights training for civil servants, and efforts related to trafficking in persons. Japan is committed to steady and continuous promotion and protection of human rights.

Additionally, Japan considers that issues of human rights and fundamental freedoms in each country are legitimate issues of concern for the international community while the state has the basic responsibility to guarantee them. As such, we are engaged in the efforts of the international community to promote and protect human rights in a spirit of dialogue and cooperation, with due consideration paid to various national and regional differences as well as historical and cultural backgrounds.

At its UPR last year, Japan received positive evaluations of its cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms such as through the issuance of a standing invitation to Special Procedures, implementation of bilateral human rights consultations, and contribution to international

were quite similar in content. In the Addendum document, Japan has clearly indicated which recommendations enjoy its support and which recommendations were noted by Japan.

Among these 174 recommendations, Japan agreed to follow up or partially follow up on 125 of them. They include those to ratify all major international human rights treaties; to further promote protection of the rights of women, children, and persons with disabilities; to provide human rights training for civil servants; and to offer increased countermeasures to combat human trafficking. Japan is pleased to commit itself to follow up the majority of the recommendations it was given.

However, following careful examination by the relevant ministries, it was also decided that Japan is unable to accept 26 of the recommendations. Japan has explained its positions on these recommendations in the Addendum. Furthermore, regarding the remaining 23 recommendations, the Government of Japan already has sufficient measures in place to address these situations. We provided explanation of our position on this during our UPR session and we do so once again in the Addendum.

Japan has been making efforts to implement the recommendations to which it agreed to follow up during its first UPR. Our on-going efforts are as we explained in our national report and during the review itself. We intend to appropriately follow up the recommendations from this round of UPR to which we are committing ourselves. Included among the recommendations are some measures which Japan is already taking, but we of course will continue to follow up on these as well.

Mr. President,

Since the time of the review, Japan has already begun to make progress on some of the recommendations it agreed to follow up. For example, Japan received a recommendation regarding the visit of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health to “ensure that [he] can meet with [disaster]-affected and evacuated people and civil society groups”. The Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health visited Japan for about two weeks in November 2012 based on the standing invitation to Special Procedures which Japan issued in March 2011. The Government of Japan did its utmost to make the Special Rapporteur’s visit a meaningful one and arranged meetings as recommended.

Japan also presented an independent midterm update on follow-up after its first review, and we intend to do the same with a view to our third

review.

Furthermore, increasing the awareness of our citizens of the results of our UPR review is important from a human rights education perspective. We plan to post a translated version of the outcome report which will be formally adopted today on Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

Mr. President,

No country has a perfect human rights record and there is room for improvement in our respective human right situations. The UPR plays a crucial role in supporting every country's unflagging efforts to improve its human rights situation. Japan is of the view that, in order to make the UPR an even more effective mechanism, recommendations should be clear, concise, and realizable and their number should be reduced from the present level.

Finally, Mr. President, Japan was again elected as a member of the Human Rights Council for the 2013-2015 term. During the Council elections, we issued a pledge document entitled "Japan's Contribution to the Promotion and Protection of International Human Rights" which details our future commitments in the area of human rights. Based on

this, Japan will continue to actively contribute as a member of the Council and work to further improve Japan's human rights situation, as well as to strengthen respect for human rights in the international community.

Thank you.