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Item 6, Consideration of UPR reports

CONSIDERATION OF THE UPR REPORT OF JAPAN

Mr. President,

Thank you for giving us the floor.

Save the Children welcomes the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of Japan, in particular the recommendations relating to children's rights.

We welcome the Government's acceptance of UPR recommendation 147.15 by Slovakia calling on Japan to consider the early ratification of the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a Communication Procedure.

We highlight and appreciate the Government's decision to support as a co-sponsor state the Human Rights Council and UN General Assembly resolutions on the Optional Protocol. We hope that the Government will sign and ratify the third Optional Protocol soon.

We also welcome the Government's acceptance of UPR recommendation 147.155 by Austria calling for measures to protect the right to health and life of residents living in the area of Fukushima from radioactive hazards.

The Great East Japan Disasters, which was a combination of an Earthquake, a Tsunami and the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant Accident, resulted in the loss of more than 18,000 lives, including 625 children.

In interviews with children in Fukushima conducted by Save the Children in late 2011 and 2012, they expressed their confusion caused by inconsistent national standards and policies on radiation risks. They also find it difficult to express their anxieties in public and sometimes even within families, fearing the possible discrimination and the conflict which it might cause.

Therefore, we call on the Government to facilitate and encourage democratic deliberation to implement the Act on the Protection and Support for the Children and other Victims of the TEPCO Disaster enacted in June 2012. The Government should formulate a comprehensive national plan of Disaster Risk Reduction on natural and man-made disasters and set the national standard on exposure to radiation with the full participation of affected communities, including the children.

Finally, we also call on the Government to share their experience of Fukushima with the international community to prepare for unexpected risks in the future through several platforms, including the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction which takes place in Japan in 2015.

Thank you.