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Human Rights Council, 23rd Session

Item 4: General Debate

Geneva, 5 June 2013

Thank you, Mr. President,

Japan is deeply concerned by the escalating armed violence in Syria and the deteriorating humanitarian situation, which could spread to the region as a whole. We appreciate the Council's timely response, including the holding of urgent debate. It is vital that all violence in Syria end immediately and that Syrian leaders make progress toward a political transition under the ownership of the Syrian people. The international community must provide collective support to the realization of dialogue among all relevant parties.

Objective reports by the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the DPRK continue to point to systematic and widespread human rights violations occurring there. This includes abuses in its prison camps, which High Commissioner

Pillay has stated may amount to “crimes against humanity.” Yet in spite of the continued concern expressed by the international community, including through UN resolutions, we deeply regret that we see no signs of improvement to the DPRK’s dire human rights situation. Given the circumstances, Japan co-sponsored with the EU a resolution on the human rights situation in the DPRK which included the establishment of a commission of inquiry and was adopted by consensus. Japan urges the DPRK authorities to cooperate fully with this commission, including by accepting its visit.

The issue most vital to Japan’s sovereignty and the lives and security of its citizens is the as-yet unresolved abduction issue. As the abductees and their families continue to grow older, not a day can be wasted in resolving the situation. Abduction is an infringement of basic human rights and thus a universal problem for the international community. Japan also recognizes that the abductions by the DPRK have not been limited to Japan.

The DPRK authorities should listen carefully to the call of the international community and make sincere efforts to improve the human

rights situation, including by addressing the abduction issue.

The human rights situation remains unstable in North Africa and the Sahel region. Japan is also concerned by the human rights situation in the Central African Republic. Regarding Mali, Japan welcomes the adoption by consensus of the resolution for “Assistance to Mali in the area of human rights”, which we jointly sponsored.

Issues involving the Sahel region were also intensively discussed during TICAD V held in Japan June 1st through 3rd. Japan remains committed to working with the African Group and the rest of the international community to address the issues of the region.

On Myanmar, Japan appreciates the recent progress toward democratization and national reconciliation. We hope that further reform and development will take place. The international community should offer constructive support for the steps the Government of Myanmar is taking to address various human rights issues as well as democratization and national reconciliation. For its part, the

Government of Japan intends to actively assist Myanmar's reform efforts for development.

Finally, on Sri Lanka, Japan appreciates a certain progress toward national reconciliation, including the formulation of the National Action Plan for implementation of LLRC recommendations, and looks forward to the continuation and promotion of further efforts. We welcome the concrete progress on arrangements for the High Commissioner's visit. Japan hopes that the Government of Sri Lanka will cooperate closely to ensure its success.

Japan shares the opinion of the international community on the importance of national reconciliation in Sri Lanka and mentioned this on many occasions including the bilateral summit meeting this March. We encourage the Government of Sri Lanka to steadily move forward on the commitments it made during this meeting, including comprehensive dialogue through the PSC and holding Northern Provincial Council elections in September. Japan intends to assist the Government's efforts through implementation of the LLRC National Action Plan and

reconstruction, including promotion of tri-lingual policy.

Thank you, Mr. President.

