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Human Rights Council 24th Session

Item 4: Interactive Dialogue with COI-Syria

Geneva, 16 September 2013

Thank you, Mr. President,

Japan appreciates that the Commission of Inquiry has produced a detailed report in spite of the challenging circumstances where the Commission has not been granted an access to Syria. We find it regrettable that the Syrian Government has not accepted a visit by the COI. We urge the Government of Syria to cooperate fully with the Commission

Japan continues to be concerned by the report of ongoing grave violations of international human rights and humanitarian law occurring in Syria including war crimes perpetrated by government forces and anti-government armed groups as well as crimes against humanity such as indiscriminate and widespread attacks against civilians committed by government forces and affiliated militia. We believe it is highly probable that chemical weapons have been used in Syria. In this regard, Japan welcomes the agreement between the US and Russia on the 14th September on a framework toward a complete destruction of chemical weapons in Syria. Japan calls for sincere response by the Syrian government based on the agreement and

will watch its real actions. The use of chemical weapons is under no circumstances permissible, and they should never be used again. We expect that investigation by the UN inspection team will also elucidate the relevant facts as soon as possible.

Japan is concerned by the fact that the prolonged violence has resulted in more than 2 million Syrian refugees and 2.8 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside the country. In order to improve the humanitarian situation, Japan strongly calls upon all parties to the conflict to observe relevant international humanitarian law and to realize unfettered humanitarian access throughout the country. The burden on neighboring countries hosting refugees is enormous. The international community should remain seized of the humanitarian crisis in Syria and Japan continues to make its utmost effort in meeting the needs on the ground by providing necessary humanitarian assistance.

An immediate end to all violence is crucial. Japan believes that the international community should offer its united support to bring all parties concerned to dialogue in order to achieve a political transition led by the Syrian people. To this end, Japan stands ready to actively engage in and contribute to the political process including the 2nd Geneva meeting in cooperation with the international community.

Thank you.