

As Delivered

**Human Rights Council 25<sup>th</sup> Session**

**Item 3: Independent Expert on Foreign Debt**

**Geneva, 10 March 2014**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Japan would like to express its appreciation to Dr. Lumina, the Independent Expert on foreign debt for his dedicated efforts to produce the detailed report through intensive exchanges of opinion with relevant parties during his visit to Japan last July. Upon his request, the Government of Japan did its utmost to make his visit a fruitful and meaningful one by arranging meetings with a wide range of parties from the government organizations to NGOs.

In his report, the Independent Expert described Japan as having “a commendable international development cooperation program.” However, in our view, Japan’s policies and views on human rights in our development and international cooperation have not been adequately

reflected in various parts of the report. Therefore, please allow me to once again explain our positions on this issue.

Mr. President,

With regard to the debt relief, Japan has provided 18.3 billion US dollars in the framework of the multilateral debt relief measures, taking into consideration, among various elements, the effects of heavy debt burden on human rights situations. Japan is one of the largest contributors to the debt relief efforts.

In recent years, in the midst of the high capital demand associated with economic growth, the diversification of fundraising by debtor countries is advancing. There has been an increase in borrowing on concessional or non-concessional terms from new creditor countries. The countries which once received comprehensive debt relief can access non-concessional funds from the private sector through, for example, issuing government bonds. Japan is concerned that these developments may lead to an increase of the number of high debt risk countries.

Given these circumstances, Japan considers it necessary to appropriately monitor the situation so that debt burdens of the debtor countries do not increase in an excessive manner.

Debt relief is a form of development assistance, and therefore it is implemented in conformity with the ODA Charter, which stipulates the principles of the international development cooperation of the Government of Japan.

The ODA Charter emphasizes the importance of “human security.” The concept of human security has a focus on individual human being and calls for building a society and a country where individual human beings can live in dignity, free from fear and want. Thus, the ODA Charter places priority on the assistance for efforts of the developing countries in the area of peace-building, democratization and promotion and protection of human rights.

The ODA Charter, under the section on the principle of ODA implementation, stipulates that full attention needs to be paid to efforts for promoting democratization, and to the situation in the recipient country regarding the protection of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms. Japanese ODA is being implemented in accordance with this principle.

The strengthening of the foundation of democracy in developing countries can lead to the wider public participation in governance and development, and the promotion and protection of human rights, and is therefore an important factor for medium-to-long-term stability and development. In line with the ODA Charter, Japan supports developing countries' efforts for human resource development, institutional building and reinforcement of economic and social foundations, which together forms the foundation for development based on good governance.

At the implementation level, Japan International Corporation Agency implements assistance in accordance with its guidelines on



environmental and social impacts, paying due consideration to the human rights aspects, in order to avoid or minimize negative effects by development projects on environment or society. Due attention is being paid to the human rights situation of the recipient country, and to the human rights of socially vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous people, people with disabilities, and minorities.

Mr. President,

As explained, Japan's development cooperation places the consideration of human rights at its center, from the highest level of policy and principles expressed in the ODA Charter, to the guidelines for implementation of its assistance, thus promoting the protection of human rights in developing countries.

In conclusion, as I have mentioned here, Japan has been making efforts to promote and protect the human rights, particularly the rights provided for in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights through our development cooperation. However, never satisfied

with the status quo, Japan intends to spare no effort for continued improvement of our efforts in the future. We will also continue to address the issue of foreign debt, including by referring to Dr. Lumina's recommendations.

I thank you.