

As delivered

Human Rights Council 22nd Session

Item 3: WG on Enforced Disappearances

Geneva, 6 March 2013

Thank you, Mr. President,

Japan greatly appreciates the role of the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances in investigating the whereabouts of those missing in cases of enforced disappearance, including some of our own citizens. We remain committed to making an active contribution in this area, including through the work of Professor Kimio Yakushiji as a member of the Committee on Enforced Disappearances, which works in collaboration with the Working Group. We hope that more countries conclude the Convention on Enforced Disappearances.

Upon accepting petitions from family members and others to confirm the whereabouts of the missing, the Working Group makes direct

inquiries with the governments in question. The Working Group can be a valuable tool for families when they struggle to gather clues about their missing relatives to resolve the situation.

At the same time—and this is true of other human rights mechanisms as well—when a country concerned continues to deny their cooperation, it is difficult for the Working Group to discharge its duties. We would like to ask the Working Group whether it has any ideas for addressing this situation.

Japanese families of abductees have requested support from the Working Group over DPRK-related cases of enforced disappearance, but unfortunately the Working Group has not received substantive cooperation by the DPRK. The victims of abduction by the DPRK include a then-13-year-old girl. As the family members of abductees continue to grow older, the urgency of this issue is made even clearer. Japan regards resolution of abductions as a priority issue, and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has pledged to completely resolve the

abduction issue during his time in office.

Given the lack of cooperation by the DPRK with the existing UN mechanisms, Japan is currently working with the EU to jointly submit a draft resolution on the DPRK which would include the establishment of a new investigative mechanism. Cases of enforced disappearance, including in the form of the abduction issue, would fall under the mandate of investigations to be conducted under this new investigative mechanism. In the event that the resolution is adopted and the new mechanism is established, Japan hopes that there will be a close cooperation between the Working Group and the new inquiry mechanism.

Concerning the statement by the Representative of the DPRK, regarding the issue of the past, we have already explained our position in the sessions on the 26th and the 28th of February. Therefore I refrain from repeating our position.

However, regarding the statement by the DPRK that the abduction issue has been settled, I would like to point out that the DPRK's statement completely contradicts the actual situation. The DPRK has not provided the Government of Japan or the families of the abductees satisfactory explanation on whereabouts of those missing Japanese.

In 2008, the DPRK changed its position and agreed to restart investigation into the abduction issue with a view to returning survivors when they are found. We urge the DPRK to secure the safety of all abductees and their immediate return home, and to ensure a full accounting of the abduction and the extradition of those who are involved in this hideous act.

In this connection, we once again thank the Working Group on Enforced Disappearances for their assistance provided for the resolution of this issue.

Thank you, Mr. President.