

As Delivered

**Human Rights Council, 22<sup>nd</sup> Session**

**Item 4: General Debate**

**Geneva, 12 March 2013**

Thank you, Mr. President,

Systematic and widespread human rights violations occurring in the DPRK have been repeatedly pointed out in objective reports by the Secretary-General and the Special Rapporteur. Japan is deeply concerned that we see no improvement regardless of the international community's continuing expressions of concern including those in UN resolutions and High Commissioner Pillay's criticism of abuses in political prison camps that may amount to "crimes against humanity". The issue most vital to Japan's sovereignty and the lives and security of its citizens is the as-yet unresolved abduction issue. Japan also recognizes that the damage inflicted by abductions by the DPRK has not been limited to Japan. As the abductees and their families continue to

grow older, not a day can be wasted in resolving the situation.

During this Council session, Japan plans to submit jointly with the EU a draft resolution on the human rights situation in the DPRK which would include the establishment of a new inquiry mechanism to investigate its human rights situation. 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.

In Myanmar, major developments continue toward democratization and national reconciliation. Japan commends the political and economic reform that has progressed since last year's transition to civilian rule. We appreciate the steady implementation of measures in the area of human rights, including the announcement of the establishment of a committee to scrutinize the remaining political prisoners still serving terms and the elimination of "pre-censorship". Issues remain regarding improvement of the situations in Kachin and Rakhine States. The

international community should offer its united support for the reform in Myanmar and for its further progress, including by responding appropriately to these outstanding issues.

Regarding Sri Lanka, Japan welcomes the formulation of the National Action Plan for implementation of LLRC recommendations and that a certain progress has been made toward the resettlement of IDPs, along with Sri Lanka's cooperation with the OHCHR such as by accepting its mission. There are challenges to the steady implementation of the National Action Plan, including the issues of holding Northern Provincial Council elections and establishing the Public Service Commission (PSC) in a timely manner. Japan hopes that the Government of Sri Lanka in the future will take up the LLRC recommendations currently not included in the National Action Plan and steadily achieve concrete outcomes toward the realization of national reconciliation.

Finally, the international community should agree to support the

voluntary efforts of the African countries for peace and stability in North Africa and the Sahel region, particularly in Mali. It is vital that human rights also be protected during times of crisis. Japan appreciates that the High Commissioner has issued a report on Mali given that worrisome instability continues in the northern part of the country. A society in which human rights are protected serves a foundation for peace and stability. Japan hopes that the Council and OHCHR will continue to play an effective role in supporting efforts to improve human rights situations in Africa, not only in cases of crisis.

Thank you.