



*Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations*

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Statement by Minister Takashi Ashiki  
Delegation of Japan  
Item 3(a): Social Integration

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Commission for Social Development  
4 February 2008

Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, on behalf of the delegation of Japan, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election. I also wish to express my gratitude to the Bureau and the Secretariat for the excellent preparations for this session of the Commission. We assure you that you have our full support and cooperation.

Mr. Chairman,

The world is in the midst of a financial and economic crisis, and Japan, too, is feeling its impact. We believe it is important to take appropriate measures to minimize the damage it does.

In any predicament, including the present crisis, it is the socially vulnerable who are most likely to suffer. In order to achieve our social development goal, which is a "Society for All," it is essential that we protect and empower children, women, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous people, minorities and other vulnerable groups and persons. We believe that to this end we must adopt policies aimed at their expeditious inclusion and integration into society.

In this connection, congratulations are due all those concerned for the launching of the first World Day of Social Justice. We hope that it will succeed in raising awareness of the need for social justice and its three pillars, identified at the World Summit for Social Development as poverty eradication, social integration, and decent work.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan has worked for some time now to promote human security by protecting and empowering the individual, and in doing so it is working to create a "Society for All." The United Nations Trust Fund for Human



Security, for example, provides financing for projects to protect women and children and other vulnerable people and promote their participation in socio-economic and political life.

For the same reasons, the Government of Japan highly values the activities of the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme, which promotes international volunteerism in response to natural disasters and to assist in the process of capacity-building in developing countries. We believe that community-based UNV activities, carried out wherever there are vulnerable people, embody the idea of human security that Japan advocates. Japan wishes to enhance its cooperation with UNV in order to advance social integration by promoting the participation of all members of society in its activities.

Mr. Chairman,

In its 2009 Global Employment Trends report, released in January, the ILO projects that, in the worst-case scenario, the number of unemployed people worldwide could, for the first time, exceed 200 million. And a quickly deepening recession could cause a "global jobs crisis." Such a crisis would pose a real danger to vulnerable people. In Japan, we are also experiencing a deterioration in our employment situation, particularly jobs for youth, the elderly, women, persons with disabilities and foreign workers.

We should not only consider employment from the perspective of economic recovery. We should also bear in mind the impact of employment on efforts to end poverty. We must always think about those groups and persons who are vulnerable. And we must ensure that the work available to the vulnerable is befitting of their human dignity. In other words, there must be decent work for all.

For this reason, Japan responded with a sense of urgency to the growing unemployment it is experiencing. It is taking all available steps, including offering job counseling and placement through a nation-wide network, supporting the efforts of smaller companies to avoid cutting their workforces, and offering job assistance for women, the elderly, person with disabilities and foreign workers. Japan regards providing protection to those who have lost jobs, including securing their housing, as of the greatest importance.

Japan also contributes to international efforts in this area, through technical assistance to developing countries that are tackling employment problems. For example, Japan is supporting an ILO-led project in Sri Lanka to alleviate unemployment and promote decent work for young people in the countryside by offering vocational and entrepreneurship training and improving employment and recruitment services.

Mr. Chairman,

Education is the key to realizing a global society free of poverty and inequality. More fundamentally, it is the key to self-reliant development in emerging nations. Adequate education can empower the impoverished and other vulnerable social groups to participate in political, economic and social activities. It can expand the range of their lifestyle choices. And it can aid them in breaking free of the cycle of poverty. For these reasons, Japan also targets education in its development aid.

While Japan is currently working to ratify at an early date the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, it will also continue to make efforts to realize the inclusive education system that is one of the important elements of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

With regard to medical and health care, it is critical to improve health systems around the world that serve infants, pregnant women, the elderly, persons with disabilities. In developing countries, 9.6 million children under the age of five lose their lives every year from avoidable causes such as infectious disease and malnutrition. A supply of vaccine should be increased and sanitary conditions should be improved. In an advanced and ageing society like Japan, the provision of medical services for the elderly is likewise a basic issue.

Japan values the mutually reinforcing strategies of a vertical approach to combating individual diseases and a horizontal, sector-wide approach to strengthening healthcare systems. At last year's G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, we emphasized the importance of strengthening health systems, for example, by developing human resources and continuing to pursue the kind of disease-prevention measures currently employed.

To follow-up on the G8 meeting, Japan hosted the Fourth G8 Health Experts' Meeting last November for the purpose of discussing further international cooperation on the health system and specific measures to improve it. Also, in cooperation with the private sector, Japan hosted the International Conference on Global Action for Health System Strengthening. Numerous health experts participated and provided recommendations to G8 countries on ways of strengthening health systems in the areas of human resources, finance and information for discussion at the next G8 Summit.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, realizing a "Society for All" requires a commitment on the part of all members and sectors of society to work

together for the common good. Japan will continue to cooperate actively to foster stable, safe and just societies, where all human rights are respected and everyone, including members of vulnerable groups, enjoys equality of opportunity.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

