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Agenda item 64: Report of the Human Rights Council

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Mr. President,

I would like to express my gratitude to His Excellency Remigiusz Henczel, President of the Human Rights Council for presenting his report today.

Since its establishment, the Human Rights Council has played an important role for promoting universal respect for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. The Council also has steadily and steadfastly accumulated numerous achievements to respond actively to human rights violations and to make recommendations thereon. For its part, the Government of Japan has made great efforts to strengthen the work and functioning of the Council.

Mr. President,

We welcome and support the transparent and strenuous activities of the various Commissions of Inquiry established by the Human Rights Council. We strongly hope that those activities, even amid various constraints, will lead to the amelioration of global human rights situations by the international community.

We appreciate the progress that has been made particularly in countries which have the will to improve their human rights situation with the assistance of country specific resolutions from the Human Rights Council. Examples include the Central African Republic, Somalia, Côte d’Ivoire and South Sudan. We are also pleased that a resolution entitled ‘Advisory services and technical assistance
for Cambodia’ submitted by Japan in cooperation with Cambodia was adopted by consensus. We support the Council in its effort to continue to provide capacity building through such resolutions.

Mr. President,

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) is a truly innovative mechanism within the Council, which can effectively improve the human rights situation of all Member States through their voluntary follow-up actions. Japan will actively engage in the efforts to make the UPR, including the follow-up of the review, more effective.

On the other hand, the UPR alone is insufficient in order to address serious human rights violations which occur around the world. In this regard, the Special Procedures complement the UPR and are indispensable mechanisms. In order for the Special Procedures to achieve their mandate, their independence and their unfettered access to countries concerned are essential. Therefore, we call for the full cooperation with the Special Procedures on the part of all parties. For its part, Japan has issued a standing invitation to the Special Procedures and as always will fully cooperate with them.

In the field of human rights, it is essential to work with civil society. Progress in this regard was made with the adoption without a vote in the Council of a draft resolution on civil society space submitted by Japan, Ireland, Tunisia, Chile and Sierra Leone this September. Member States need to ensure a safe and enabling environment where individuals belonging to civil society are able to enjoy universally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The resources of the Council including its budget are stretched thin due to an increased number of resolutions and Special Procedures. On the one hand, we must ensure that the council has a budget for necessary mandates; on the other, we should consider how the work of the Council should move forward henceforth with a view toward preventing the duplication of mandates and enhancing its overall effectiveness and efficiency.

Mr. President,

Japan will continue to conduct its diplomacy by promoting universal values such as human rights and democracy. Japan will also continue to fulfill its responsibility as a member of the Human Rights Council.

I thank you, Mr. President.