Mr. Chairman,

The promotion and protection of all human rights are legitimate concerns of the international community. For this reason, Japan has been actively engaging in efforts to improve both domestic and international human rights situations through various frameworks.

Japan highly values the discussions and resolutions here at the third committee of the General Assembly, as this forum provides the international community with the opportunities and mechanisms to address universal concerns and make decisions based on valuable inputs from various UN agencies, Special Representatives of Secretary General (SRSG), Special Rapporteurs, civil society and other stakeholders. This forum is a venue for dialogue and interaction, through which the human rights of all people all over the world can be enhanced and protected. In this regard, the activities of the Special Rapporteurs and other human rights mechanisms should be granted the utmost cooperation and access from all member states. Only by doing so will grave violations of human rights be dealt with, and will those responsible be put to justice.

For its part, Japan also engages with bilateral human rights dialogues with various countries, including Myanmar and Iran. Such dialogues contribute to the amelioration of the human rights situations of the respective countries through open and candid discussions. Japan would continue its activities to promote and protect human rights through both these multilateral and bilateral undertakings.
<Syria>

With regard to Syria, we are pleased to see the progress that has been made by the Security Council and other actors in the effort to decommission chemical weapons in that country, and Japan continues to support the efforts of the Member States and the UN organizations to prevent chemical weapons from ever being used again.

The progress on chemical weapons notwithstanding, we are deeply dismayed at how little progress has been made with regard to the continuing desperate human rights and security situation of the Syrian people. We strongly condemn all violence and all violations of human rights in Syria. Japan calls upon the Government of Syria to take necessary measures to bring these violations of human rights situation to end, and further hopes that progress will be made in a political transition process led by the Syrian people.

Japan also appreciates the activities of the Commission of Inquiry despite the challenging circumstances such as the Commission being denied access to Syria. We urge the Government of Syria to cooperate fully with the Commission. Japan will actively engage in the Syria issue in order to end violence and commence political dialogue and improve the humanitarian situation.

<The DPRK>

Japan would like to echo the grave concern that has been expressed by other Member States on human rights violations in the DPRK as well as the DPRK’s reluctance to cooperate with various human rights mechanisms, as clearly reported by the Commission of Inquiry (COI) to this Committee on Tuesday. Japan, together with EU, will submit a resolution on the DPRK human rights situation calling for the improvement of human rights situations there. Japan would like to seek the support of the Member States for this resolution.

The aforementioned resolution also includes the issue of the abductions of Japanese nationals by the DPRK, which in particular is deeply troubling to us and has shown no progress in the ten years that have passed since the first Japan-DPRK Summit Meeting in 2002. Out of the 17 Japanese citizens who are confirmed to have been abducted in the 1970’s and 80’s, 12 have still not been returned, and the DPRK has failed to provide credible accounts of their whereabouts. Furthermore, there are other cases of missing persons in which the possibility of abduction by North Korea cannot be ruled out. The resolution of this issue is urgent in view of the age of the abductees and their families. The DPRK has abducted not only Japanese
citizens but citizens of other nationalities. The abductions issue is a grave violation of human rights and thus a matter of universal concern for the international community as a whole.

<Iran>

We are paying attention to a number of positive signals that we have seen under the new Government of Dr. Hassan Rouhani since his inauguration as the new President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, including the release of foreign and political prisoners arrested following the post-election unrest of the presidential elections of 2009. In the context of these positive signals, Japan held its ninth human rights dialogue with Iran this September, and Japan will continue its dialogue and cooperation with the government of Iran.

At the same time, we see many issues yet to be improved in the situation of human rights in Iran. We express our concern about the continued limitation of freedom of expression and use of cruel punishment. We would call upon the government of Iran to ratify the Convention against Torture, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, at the earliest possible date. Furthermore, we would urge the government to cooperate with the international community through realizing a substantive visit to Iran by Ms. Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and accepting a visit by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iran.

<Myanmar>

Japan is greatly encouraged to see the various measures that have been taken by the Government of Myanmar toward democratization, national reconciliation and economic reform over the last several years. These include the ongoing release of prisoners of conscience, and improving respect for the rights to freedom of opinion and expression. Being attentive to the progress of the reform efforts of Myanmar, Japan continues to provide assistance to that country.

Of course, from a humanitarian perspective, Japan is still concerned by the communal conflict and subsequent situation in Rakhine State. It is of great importance that violence be put to an end, and the Government of Myanmar and other stakeholders, taking the final report of the Investigative Commission into consideration, should work to make further progress in the national reconciliation process. For its part, the international community should cooperate to create an environment where such progress can be made.
The human rights situation in Cambodia has been progressively improving since the peace accord 20 years ago. However, the country still faces several challenges. Japan encourages the new Cambodian Government to take measures to continue and accelerate this progress as well as to cooperate with the international community through dialogue and cooperation among the relevant stakeholders in order for both the Government and the Parliament to work smoothly. The consensual adoption by the Human Rights Council of the resolution on the human rights situation in Cambodia has been a good model of dialogue and cooperation.