

(Check against delivery)

Statement by Ms. Shoko Haruki  
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations  
at the Fifth Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing  
30 July 2014

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you for holding this fifth working session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. I also thank the bureau and the UN Secretariat for their efforts in organizing the meeting.

Mr. Chairman,

Human rights of older persons is an issue Japan has been engaged in for a long time, largely due to the fact that Japan has the most rapidly ageing population in the world. The percentage of the population that is 65 or over is 25.1 percent. By 2060, that percentage is estimated to reach around 40 percent. The reasons for rapid ageing in my country are the lengthening of life-spans due to improvement of living conditions and food quality, as well as advancement of medical treatment, and a declining birth rate.

Mr. Chairman,

Ageing has been on the international agenda for around thirty years. In this time the United Nations has created frameworks for discussing and acting on policy directed at older persons.

The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing has provided us with guidelines for policy formulation and implementation for an ageing world.

States Parties that concluded human rights treaties ought to fulfill their obligations and implement efforts to protect the rights of older persons. As long as countries remain States

Parties, they will continue to be reviewed on their implementation of the treaties by the treaty bodies.

UN special procedure mandate holders can identify, examine, and advise on the situation of older persons in accordance with their mandates. Member States can further discuss challenges such as discrimination, abuse, health, and employment, based on their reports. We hope that the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of All Human Rights by Older Persons, Ms. Rosa Kornfeld-Matte, will contribute to promotion of human rights of older persons in accordance with her mandate, and that we will have the privilege of exchanging our views with her at this session. Furthermore, we stress that this Working Group should work in close coordination with special procedures, relevant United Nations organizations and treaties.

The significant point that was stressed by some states at previous sessions is that we should raise the issue of ageing more within the UN, for example in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and through involvement in the UN Funds and Programmes in an effort to support older persons in developing countries

Through using the frameworks we have created so far, it is necessary to first identify the gaps between existing frameworks and the actual challenges faced by older persons. The successful conclusion of the second review of the Madrid Plan of Action and its results could be used during the process of this identification.

Mr. Chairman,

An ageing society is not just one country's issue. Japan, as the most rapidly ageing country, has cooperated with other countries in combating the challenges of ageing.

It is said that ageing rates in some ASEAN countries will be similar to or even higher than those of Japan in coming years. We believe that it is worth sharing information on global problems and experiences between ASEAN countries and Japan.

Japan is currently promoting cooperation with ASEAN for Active Ageing. According to WHO, Active Ageing is the process of optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age.

In Jakarta this June, Japan held "ASEAN Japan Active Ageing Regional Conference" in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat, JICA and the Toyota Foundation. At the

conference, the challenges of older persons in the areas of elderly care, health, and welfare were discussed, and experiences were shared among the participants.

Mr. Chairman,

We would like to discuss possible gaps in the Working Group, and look forward to exchanging views with other Member States, the UN agencies, and civil society.

Thank you.