



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 223-4300 · www.un.int/japan/

(Please check against delivery)

**Statement by Ms. Arino Yaguchi
Alternate Representative of Japan**

On Item 65: The Rights of Indigenous Peoples

**Third Committee
69th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
New York, 20 October 2014**

Madam Chair,

It is a great honor to speak before the Third Committee on behalf of the Government of Japan on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Japan welcomes the High-Level Plenary meeting of the 69th session of the General Assembly, known as the “World Conference on Indigenous Peoples,” which was held this past September. Representatives of the Ainu people, who are also members of the Council for Ainu Policy Promotion, participated in the Conference as members of the delegation of the Government of Japan. We also welcome that the outcome document of the Conference was adopted by consensus.

Madam Chair,

Since the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by the General Assembly in September 2007, Japan has steadily made efforts on indigenous issues. In 2008, the Government of Japan recognized the Ainu people as an indigenous people. The Ainu live in the northern part of the Japanese archipelago, particularly in Hokkaido. They

have a unique language, and a distinctive culture and religion.

Thereafter the Government of Japan set up the Advisory Council for Future Ainu Policy, consisting of several high-level experts, including a representative of the Ainu people. In July 2009, the Advisory Council submitted a report which proposed several basic principles for Ainu policy and recommended measures in various areas, including education, the revitalization of Ainu culture, and the promotion of industrial development.

The Government of Japan then established the Council for Ainu Policy Promotion, hosted by the Chief Cabinet Secretary in December 2009. This was the first forum in which several Ainu representatives actively took part in order to reflect their views in official policy making-process. The Council is currently discussing comprehensive and effective measures for the Ainu people to realize the recommendations by the aforementioned Advisory Council.

The Government of Japan is working on two major projects that were proposed by the Advisory Council, and followed by the reports of the Council's Working Group.

The first project is the establishment of the Symbolic Space for the Ethnic Harmony. The space will be completed in Shiraoi Town, in Hokkaido, as a national center for revitalizing Ainu culture. It will become a focal point, where people from all over Japan can come and explore Ainu history and culture. The symbolic space will contribute considerably to preserve and succeed Ainu culture. It also aims to develop Ainu culture for the future generations. The symbolic space will include a museum, a park with a traditional Ainu village, and facility to keep remains of the Ainu people. The Cabinet approved the basic policy for its development and management of the Symbolic Space in June this year. The Government of Japan will do everything possible to facilitate its opening which is to coincide with the opening of the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020.

The second project is the promotion and further implementation of measures for Ainu people who reside outside of Hokkaido. While the majority of the Ainu people reside in Hokkaido, others are scattered across Japan. A nationwide survey conducted from 2010 to 2011 found gaps in the education and standard of living between Ainu and non-Ainu people in Japan. The Government of Japan is currently establishing a system to identify those who are eligible for measures intended to correct these disparities including a scholarship program for Ainu youth. The Government of Japan is also providing trial consultation services for Ainu people.

Madam Chair,

In conclusion, Japan is working and will continue to work closely with the Ainu people to achieve a society where the diversity of all people is respected, through various policy measures proposed by the Advisory Council responding to the situation surrounding our country and the Ainu people, with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Furthermore, Japan is committed to making efforts to tackle the many issues faced by indigenous people around the world, in cooperation with the United Nations and other actors within the international community.

I thank you, Madam Chair.