**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Motohide Yoshikawa**

**Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations**

**International Day of Persons with Disabilities**

**“Break Barriers, Open Doors: for an inclusive society and development for all”**

**3 December 2013**

Fellow Ambassadors,

Distinguished guests,
And Participants,

I am very happy to be here as one of the co-organizers of today’s events commemorating the International Day of Persons with Disabilities. I wish to extend my deep appreciation to the other co-organizers, namely; the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and Leonard Cheshire Disability.

My task today is not to make a long statement, but, to introduce Madame Mutsuko Takenouchi, who has come from Japan. She is the founder of the organization called AIKOBO, which means in Japanese “Indigo Studio”. It is a Tokyo-based welfare organization that offers persons with disabilities an opportunity to learn traditional arts crafts and then they sell them without any subsidies. It is a marvelous organization, and I will let her tell us in her own word what she does.

I want to add that, this evening from six o’clock to seven-thirty we are organizing a reception for all the participants on the first floor of the secretariat building. Madame Takenouchi has brought the people who have worked with her and there will be a demonstration of what they do, and we will serve some sushi and drinks; so you are all very welcome at the end of today’s work.

I want to add a couple of things. From the government’s viewpoint on how to promote the human rights of persons with disabilities; we would like to take advantage of decision made this summer in Buenos Aires that Tokyo will be hosting the 2020 Paralympics. We would like to take advantage of this opportunity, still some years to go, but with preparation, to foster the inclusion of people from all walks of life through sports. I will be inviting all of you to give us information and ideas so that 2020 will not be only the occasion for the Olympic Games, but focus will be given to the Paralympics.

With these words I would like to invite Ms. Takenouchi, the founder of AIKOBO, to speak to us and explain what she has been doing.

Thank you very much.