

(Check against delivery)

Statement by Mr. Tetsuya Kimura
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At the Fourth Session of the Conference of State Parties to
the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
7 September 2011

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

My delegation is honored to participate as a signatory in this fourth session of the Conference of State Parties to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Five years ago, we adopted the Convention by consensus in the General Assembly. Since then efforts for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms of Persons with Disabilities have been made through its legal framework. Japan participated actively in negotiations to draft the Convention and signed it in 2007. Japan is now in the process of preparing for the conclusion of the Convention. Today, Japan would like to take this opportunity to share with you the positive measures we have taken in the last few years.

Firstly, the Government of Japan established the “Ministerial Board for Disability Policy Reform” through the Cabinet in December 2009. The Prime Minister heads the Board, of which all ministers are members. The Ministerial Board was established for the purpose of advancing intensive institutional reforms, including improvements to relevant domestic laws necessary for concluding and implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Furthermore, recognizing that not only governments but also persons with disabilities participated in the negotiations of the Convention, and also responding to domestic requests, we felt it was important to establish a mechanism whereby the voices of persons with disabilities can be heard and reflected in national policies. To meet this

objective, the “Committee for Disability Policy Reform” of which half the members are either persons with disabilities or family members of person with disabilities, was convened under the auspices of the Ministerial Board.

Secondly, the Amended Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities was approved on 29 July 2011. The purpose of the law is to realize “a society in which all citizens co-exist and mutually respect personality and individuality without separation regardless of disability.” Two features of the new law are worth pointing out. First, it sets up the Committee on Measures for Persons with Disabilities which oversees implementation and monitoring of on-the-ground measures taken for persons with disabilities. Second, it includes the negligence of ensuring to provide necessary and appropriate accommodation as discrimination based on disabilities, which is the first example of the legal concept of ‘reasonable accommodations’ to be included in our domestic body of law. These provisions are in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Lastly, we have been engaged in international cooperation as embodied in Article 32 of the Convention. The Government of Japan has been contributing to this through its official development assistance (ODA). For example, we have been promoting “barrier-free” railway facilities and university campuses, and have also been establishing rehabilitation and vocational training facilities for persons with disabilities.

Mr. President,

Presently, in addition to what we have achieved so far, Japan is in the process of drafting new legislative measures regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of persons with disabilities. Despite many challenges, we will work closely with persons with disabilities and organizations that represent them, with the aim of protecting and promoting their rights.

I thank you for your kind attention.
