

(Check against delivery)

Statement by Mr. Tetsuya Kimura
Minister, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
At the Second Working Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing
1 August 2011

Mr. Chairman,

We thank you, Mr. Chairman for convening the Second Session of the Open-Ended Working Group on Ageing. We would like to engage in the dialogue actively in order to make the discussions vibrant and interactive.

The older population is rapidly growing around the world including in the developing world. We should create a society where each older person can enjoy his or her human rights fully and participate in society as a citizen.

It is necessary that Governments formulate policies for older persons in light of each country's national demographic structure as well as its social and economic situation in a medium- and long-term perspective. Furthermore, international efforts for the protection and promotion of human rights for older persons are also to be encouraged. A wide range of cooperative activities among national and local governments, the United Nations system, the private sector, civil society and older persons themselves are necessary. We are looking forward to exchanging view and thoughts with regard to the policies of Member States on ageing as well as best practices at the national and international level. Furthermore, it is also important to implement fully the Madrid Plan of Action on Ageing. We expect further actions to be taken by international community will be considered on the basis of the upcoming review of the Action Plan.

In Japan, the percentage of the population that is 65 or over now exceeds 23 percent. That means nearly one out of every five people is 65 or over. By 2055, that proportion is projected to reach about 40 percent, or two out of every five people. At the same time, the growth of our younger and working-age populations remains stagnant. At the moment

there are 2.8 working-age adults to support each older person. However, by 2055 there will only be 1.3 working-age adult to support each older person. Compared to most other countries, the ageing of society in Japan is progressing very rapidly.

Under these circumstances, Japan is engaged in the issue of ageing through two acts adopted by our Government: ‘the Aged Society Basic Act’ and ‘the Fundamental Framework of Measures for the Ageing Society.’ In particular, Japan places priority on issues such as fostering self-reliance and independence of lifestyle for older persons, strengthening cooperation between different generations, and promoting the participation of older persons in local society. Our Government has been steadily implementing specific measures such as ensuring income by providing employment opportunities and establishing a reliable public pension system, promoting health and well-being through medical insurance reform and promoting social participation such as volunteering.

Mr. Chairman,

We expect today’s discussions to contribute to the protection and promotion of the human rights of older persons, to raise awareness of this issue in the international community and to provide an opportunity to exchange necessary and effective ways to address ageing.

Thank you very much.
