



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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Statement by Ms. Shoko Haruki
First Secretary, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
at the Fourth Working Session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing
12 August 2013

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to thank you for holding this fourth 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,

In 2012 Japan conducted a national review and issued a report as part of the second review of the Madrid Action Plan. We also participated in the review for the Asia-Pacific region and the one for the United Nations. During these reviews, some progress on policies and actions in a number of countries were reported, but it was also reported that challenges to the full implementation of the Action Plan still remain. It was also shown that it is in fact necessary to address the needs of older persons and develop policies and planning for them even in countries where the proportion of older persons in the general population is low.

States Parties of the various human rights treaties ought to fulfill their obligations and to implement efforts to protect the human rights of older persons, in accordance with those treaties which they have concluded. The States Parties of said treaties need to review their implementation, and make efforts toward the fulfillment of that implementation, based on the consideration of the treaty bodies. Special Rapporteurs of the UN can identify, examine and advise on the situation of older persons in accordance with their mandates, and then report their findings to the United Nations. Discussions in the UN on issues related to older persons proceed from respective efforts of the Special Rapporteurs. We believe that the review of the policies of Member States for older persons in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) could help to mainstream the issue of ageing within the UN. Furthermore, the engagement of the UN Funds and Programmes in efforts to support older persons in developing countries would greatly contribute to the improvement of their situation.

With this mind, we should first identify the gaps between existing frameworks and the actual challenges faced by older persons, taking into consideration the second review, and then we should discuss how we might fully implement those frameworks including the Madrid Action Plan.

Though many populations throughout the world are ageing, Japan is the most rapidly ageing population of them all. In responding to this reality, the Government of Japan has been engaged in the policies of older persons based on “the Basic Law on Measures for the Ageing Society” and “the General Principles Concerning Measures for the Aged Society”. A second review of the General Principles was conducted last year, about eleven years since the first review in 2001. It was concluded in the second review that we must alter our perception of older persons, the perception that older persons are invariably vulnerable, and we must acknowledge how talented older persons are and how motivated they are to support their society. We also concluded that the function and effectiveness of our social security system needs to be strengthened.

Mr. Chairman,

This Working Group is a significant forum for us to interactively discuss the strengthening of the protection of the human rights of older persons, based on the General Assembly resolution A/RES/65/182. Japan would like to identify possible gaps in these protections and work with the other Member States, the UN agencies and civil society, to consider how best to address these gaps in order to realize the human rights and fundamental freedoms of older persons.

Thank you.