



**Statement by Ambassador Kenzo Oshima
Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations
The Third Committee
New York, 30 October 2006**

Mr. Chairman,

Human rights are universal values, and no state may shirk its responsibility to protect and promote all human rights of its own people. In a free and democratic society, respect for and protection of basic human rights is of fundamental importance for the government and the citizens.

Not only at the national level. As stipulated in the Vienna Declaration and the Programme of Action, the promotion and protection of all human rights is a legitimate concern of the international community as a whole.

In achieving this objective in the real world, we recognize that a balance needs to be struck between the “principle” level and “implementation” level. We endeavor to achieve the promotion and protection of human rights as universal values, while at the same time taking into account the defining situations of each country in regard to its history, tradition and culture.

The United Nations has played a key role in standard setting in the field of human rights. Among recent notable successes are the draft of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, which is one of the first substantive outcomes of the Human Rights Council, and the draft of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which concluded a long negotiation in the Ad Hoc Committee. Japan sincerely hopes that the General Assembly will adopt these draft Conventions as early as possible.

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment of the Human Rights Council represents a significant step forward in mainstreaming human rights in the international community. Building on the past accomplishments made, particularly in standard setting by the Commission on Human Rights, the new Human Rights Council is expected to develop into a forum which contributes to strengthening the capacity of states and communities to implement principles, rules and standards, and thus to make a difference on the ground in the protection and promotion of human rights.

However, we must express some concern that the performance of the Council so far has not met our expectations. We earnestly hope that the Council will find its way to foster a new spirit of international cooperation and to build up practices in the handling of human rights issues, particularly in addressing massive and grave violations of human rights, with decisiveness, swiftness and flexibility. Japan is committed to play a constructive role to that end as a member of the Council.

Japan supports the efforts of the High Commissioner for Human Rights to strengthen the country engagement of her Office through stepping up the necessary support and assistance to the countries in need of such assistance and providing a comprehensive response tailored to the specific situations of the countries concerned.

Mr. Chairman,

In the last few decades, the human rights situation in the world has improved significantly; democratization and the rule of law have seen remarkable progress in many parts of the world. However, it is also true that we still witness numerous grave violations of human rights in a number of situations around the world. The United Nations must continue to be active in helping to resolve these grave human rights violations. In doing so, the international community must act in unity as much as possible and send a clear message against those violations.

One example close to our shores is the DPRK, where serious human rights violations continue with no sign of improvement. The issue of abduction of foreign nationals, including Japanese nationals, by the DPRK agents remains unresolved. The DPRK authorities, while admitting the fact that they abducted Japanese citizens in the past, have failed to provide satisfactory information about the eleven such abductees much to the grief of the affected families.

Japan calls on the DPRK to seriously address the issue of their human rights violations, including returning the abductees immediately to their homelands. We call on the DPRK to sincerely respond to the calls made in the General Assembly Resolution on their human rights situation adopted last year, as well as the concerns expressed in the recently adopted Security Council Resolution 1718 that clearly underlined the importance for the DPRK to respond to humanitarian concerns of the international community.

I would like to mention that today, in this conference room, some family members of the abductees and their supporters are observing the Committee deliberations. My delegation strongly hopes that the deliberations in this Committee will assist in their earnest desire to resolve this painful case of human dignity as soon as possible, in full respect of humanitarian and human rights concerns.

In this regard, Japan appreciates the sincere efforts by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in the DPRK, Mr. Muntarbhorn. We strongly urge the DPRK to respond to the call from the international community and accept the visit of the Special Rapporteur as soon as possible, which is the least minimum any state which cares about human rights of citizens should do. The DPRK authorities are expected to show this minimum of the respect of the commonly held value; they are expected to engage in dialogue with the international community, and not in threats with a nuclear test or ballistic missile launches.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman,

Time is upon us now to redouble our efforts in order to promote and protect all human rights. Japan, for its part, is determined to continue to work constructively to this end, in cooperation with the international community, and in particular with the United Nations.