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THE JAPANESE WORKERS' COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

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Regional Arrangement and human Rights

Statement by Mr. Akira MAEDA

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on behalf of the

Japanese Workers' Committee for Human Rights (JWCHR)

We, Japanese Workers' Committee for Human Rights welcome the Draft report on regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights prepared by Professor Changrok Soh (A/HRC/AC/19/CRP.1. 2 August 2017). As the report points out, Asia does not yet possess a regional arrangement for the protection of human rights excepting Southeast Asia.

In this regard, we would like introduce the situation and new steps by NGOs in East Asia.

In 2010, several NGOs of Republic of Korea and Japan adopted the Declaration on history, human rights and peace in East Asia. 2010 was the 100 anniversary of colonialize Korean Peninsula by Imperial Japan. The Declaration called the creation of East Asian Community and regional human rights mechanism in East Asia.

Last September we established the Japanese Academic Society of the East

Asian Community and Okinawa/Ryukyu Islands. One of the advisers of this Academic Society is Mr. Yukio Hatoyama who was the former Prime Minister of Japan.

Hatoyama's Democratic Party Administration, which emerged after the national election in the summer of 2009, announced that it would take on the task of "establishing an East Asian Community" that valued Asia as a new contributor to an initiative for economic order, peace, and cooperation. Since then, we have discussed the necessity of East Asian Community.

The East Asian Community Initiative presupposes the realization of a regional model based on the EU system for the integration of East Asia.

In East Asia today, military tensions have been rising in the form of military expansion by China and North Korea against a perceived threat posed by other countries. Meanwhile, there is a deepening trend of economic interdependence among Asian countries with China stimulating recent growth.

In the current political climate, the situation of human rights of peoples in this region became worse and worse now. Especially, Okinawa/Ryukyu Islands seems to hold the key for the establishment of peace and right to peace in East Asia. It is critical to transform Okinawa from its past as the "military keystone" to that of the "keystone of peace", and to make it a haven for the integration and solidarity of nations in the region in the pursuit of the realization of an East Asian Community.

Okinawa/Ryukyu Islands was one area in Asia that had tragically suffered much during the Pacific War and was forced to be put under U.S. military occupation for the next 27 years.

Meanwhile, postwar Japan acted as if it had forgotten its recent history of having inflicted destruction and suffering in the Asia-Pacific region, as the Draft report by Professor Soh says the following (paragraph 44, page 16).

"Japan is unwilling to account for its past war-crime human rights violations."

Yes, Government has denied its past war crime and crimes against humanity.

Now is the time for Japan to decolonize herself from the U. S. and to overcome colonialism over Asia peoples.

Our Society has three objectives. The first is to achieve the genuine independence of Japan which has continued to be dependent on the U.S. War. The second is to deepen the discussion of the East Asian Community Initiative to establish peace and to protect human rights in this region. And the last is to study from various perspectives, how Okinawa will be able to exercise the right of self-determination.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.