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**UPR of Belarus– Statement of Japan**

**4 May 2015**

Mr. /Madam President,

Japan warmly welcomes the delegation of Belarus.

Japan notes with appreciation the proactive steps Belarus <sup>has taken</sup> ~~has been taking~~ to promote women’s rights and the social advancement of women through the implementation of the Fourth National Action Plan for Gender Equality.

At the same time, we are concerned by reports of constraints placed on the activities of human rights defenders and journalists, as well as reports on intimidation, reprisal, threats, and violence against them. Japan **recommends** that: Belarus ensure the safety of human rights defenders and journalists as well as respect for their human rights, particularly freedom of expression and freedom of the press; and undertake swift and transparent investigation in respect to the reports of intimidation, reprisal, threats, and violence.

There have also been reports of issues concerning the living standards and social protection of persons with disabilities, labor and employment of them, as well as barrier-free access. Japan **recommends** that appropriate legislative measures be taken toward ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and toward improvement of living conditions, employment opportunities, and access of persons with disabilities.

Thank you.