



Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your re-election as Chairman of this epoch-making body. Also, I would like to welcome all the members of the Forum as well as NGOs, including in particular those indigenous people who have returned to New York to attend this important session.

I would like to thank the panelists for their presentation, which was very useful and informative.

Japan attaches great importance to issues concerning children, and is actively involved in promotion and protection of the rights of the child. In this connection, my delegation welcomes the high-level panel and dialogue focusing on issues relating to indigenous children and youth during this session of the Forum.

In cooperation with UNICEF and the international NGO group, Japan hosted the Second World Congress Against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children in 2001. We adopted the Yokohama Global Commitment 2001, which, among other subjects, addressed poverty, inequality, discrimination, and persecution, and reaffirmed the commitment to build a culture of respect for all persons based upon the principle of non-discrimination. These issues have relevance to indigenous children and youth. Also, Japan has been taking initiatives, such as making positive contributions to activities to support children in the world in a variety of fields, including education, through contributions to UNICEF.

My delegation agrees with other speakers that reliable and complete data are necessary if we are accurately to analyze the present situation the indigenous people are facing and consider how to address it. We would like to express our appreciation to the Inter-Agency Support Group for producing the joint paper on data collection and aggregation by ethnicity. We take note with interest of a recommendation of IASG that the Forum clarify further the specific goals and objectives to which data disaggregation is expected to contribute.

In response to the recommendations of the Forum last year, the Committee on the Rights of the Child plans to hold a general discussion on the rights of indigenous children in September this year. We welcome this initiative of the Committee. It is my delegation's sincere hope that active and useful discussions and recommendations of the Forum during this session will make a great contribution to the success of the international community in addressing this issue.

Thank you very much.