

48

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Statement by the Japanese Delegation

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.

First of all, I would like to congratulate you upon your reelection as Chairperson of this Working Group and take this opportunity of expressing our admiration for the efficient and equitable manner in which you have been chairing it. I feel confident that under your able and firm leadership, the Working Group will make progress in discharging the difficult and complex tasks before it. I would also like to express our admiration of the eager debates by the members and the observers of this Working Group.

Now, my delegation wishes to make an intervention on the statements made by the Ainu Association of Hokkaido.

Madame Chairperson,

In Japan, everyone has the right to enjoy their own culture, to practice their own religion and to use their own language, and the Ainu people who wish to preserve their own culture are thus not denied the enjoyment of these rights as national of Japan where equality is guaranteed under the Constitution.

In the implementation of various administrative measures, the Ainu people, as Japanese nationals, are treated equally just as the rest of the Japanese people are.

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Furthermore, with a view to implementing special positive measures designed to improve the social and economic status of the Ainu people, comprehensive steps have been taken since 1974. These measures include the improvement of their living environment, strengthening their social welfare, the promotion of their education and culture, and the transmission and preservation of their social and cultural heritage.

In particular, for the purpose of preserving and transmitting Ainu culture, such measures as the study and recording of the Ainu's cultural inheritance and an educational program on the Ainu language, have been taken. The Government of Japan and local public entities have made special budget allocations for these measures, which are contributing to raising the social and economic status of the Ainu people.

The Government of Japan has every intention of continuing to make such efforts.

Thank you, Madame Chairperson.