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**Statement by H.E. Mr. KIMURA Tetsuya
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20th Session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Item 4: Discussion on the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum (economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights), with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

29 April 2021

Mr. Chair,

Japan has made continuous efforts to promote indigenous people's cultures and identities.

In 2008, our National Diet adopted resolutions to recognize the Ainu population as an indigenous people of Japan, and then-Chief Cabinet Secretary released a statement acknowledging the Ainu people as an indigenous people of Japan.

The Government of Japan has conducted discussions and consultations with relevant stakeholders, in particular with the Ainu people, on comprehensive and effective measures including for education, cultural revitalization and the economic development of the Ainu people, and has reflected their opinions in its policy on the Ainu people.

In 2019, Japan enacted legislation on comprehensive promotion of local Ainu communities, industries and cultural exchanges through tourism. The act legally recognizes the Ainu people as an indigenous people and states its objective as “realizing a society that will respect the pride of the Ainu”. The act also establishes subsidiaries to promote Ainu culture and makes special provisions so that the Ainu people can log in state-owned forests and catch salmon in rivers for the purpose of protecting and promoting their traditional culture.

Furthermore, in July 2020, Japan opened the “Symbolic Space for Ethnic Harmony,” as a national center for the revitalization of the Ainu culture. The Symbolic Space is called “UPOPOY,” which means “singing together in a large group” in the Ainu language.

Mr. Chair,

The culture of Ainu places much emphasis on respect to all the living creatures. Japan is determined to continue to work closely with the Ainu people to achieve a society where the diversity and dignity of all individuals are respected.

I thank you.