

Statement by KAWASE Taro, Counsellor and Legal Advisor, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, at the Meeting of the Sixth Committee on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels (Agenda Item 85)

Thank you, Madam Chair.

Japan appreciates the Deputy Secretary-General's briefing on United Nations rule of law activities as well as the Report of the Secretary-General on the matter, contained in A/76/235.

Maintaining and strengthening the rule of law is imperative to facilitate the peaceful resolution of disputes in an equitable and predictable manner. This is a common interest of each Member State. Japan has contributed and will continue to contribute to the maintenance and strengthening of the rule of law, which is a global public good. Japan strives not only for sincere adherence to international law but also promotes the peaceful resolution of international disputes.

In this regard, Japan contributes to the reinforcement of the functioning of international judicial organizations, notably the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) and the International Criminal Court (ICC), by providing both human and financial resources. Thanks to support from the Member States, Judge IWASAWA Yuji of the ICJ, Judge AKANE Tomoko of the ICC, and Judge YANAI Shunji of the ITLOS are currently playing active roles in their respective organizations. Japan is also the biggest financial contributor to the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and to the ICC, which is an essential mechanism for ensuring accountability for the most serious international crimes.

Madam Chair,

The rule of law in the maritime field is particularly important for Japan as a maritime nation. States should make and clarify their claims based on international law, States should not use force or coercion in trying to drive their claims, and States should seek to settle disputes by peaceful means consistent with international law, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). A free and open ocean based on the rule of law is the basis for peace and prosperity in the world. The importance of the UNCLOS as a holistic and universal framework cannot be emphasized enough.

Madam Chair,

On September 10th the Secretary-General presented his report "Our Common Agenda" to the General Assembly, looking ahead to the next 25 years. Japan strongly welcomes the report's emphasis on the importance of the rule of law. The report notes that the Member States, in their 75th anniversary declaration, agreed to abide by the international agreements they have entered into and the commitments they have made, to promote respect for democracy and human rights, and to enhance democratic governance and the rule of law by strengthening transparent and accountable governance and independent judicial institutions. The report also insists that, building on these commitments,

consideration could be given to a global road map for the development and effective implementation of international law, and that could also urge Member States to accept the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ and to withdraw reservations to treaty clauses relating to the exercise of its jurisdiction¹. Japan strongly supports this.

Also, the Report of the Secretary-General on United Nations rule of law activities points out that deep inequalities, including in the distribution of wealth, resources, justice and security, were exposed by COVID-19, and that this has eroded public trust especially among the young generation. In this respect, as our Foreign Minister MOTEGI stated during the High Level Week, we are pleased to share that Japan co-hosted the COVAX AMC Summit in June 2021 where Japan pledged to make a financial contribution amounting to 1 billion USD in total. In addition, Japan has provided around 25 million doses of COVID vaccine to date, which is the third-largest amount in the world, and we will provide up to approximately 60 million doses in total. Japan reiterates its commitment to the global efforts to fight back against the COVID-19 pandemic and promote trust in society.

In closing, Japan reiterates its appreciation for and reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations, the General Assembly and the International Law Commission (ILC) in their efforts to promote and universalize the rule of law.

I thank you.

¹ https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf (para 96)