

**71st Session of the UNHCR Executive Committee
(Statements by Japan: agenda item 4(a))**

Agenda Item 4(a) International Protection

Mr. Chairman,

Japan pays tribute to UNHCR for its tireless efforts to provide protection for persons of concern under the restricted circumstances caused by COVID-19.

We fully recognize the importance of international protection in responding to the challenges surrounding persons of concern. However, the pandemic has created unexpected difficulties for the international protection regime. In particular, it has raised the delicate question of how to strike a balance between public health and the right to seek asylum. Japan appreciates UNHCR's continuous efforts to ensure access to fair asylum procedures through tenacious dialogue with the relevant authorities. We must keep in mind the spirit of solidarity and burden- and responsibility-sharing—the core principles of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)—in addressing the protection challenges under the pandemic.

From our experience of COVID-19, we have come to realize the growing importance of use of technologies and innovation for protection. Japan encourages UNHCR to utilize technologies matched to its operations to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its activities.

Mr. Chairman,

We recognize the fact that there are many different protection needs and challenges for each individual due to the complexity of displacement and factors of age, gender and diversity (AGD). Japan expresses its appreciation to UNHCR for respecting the diversities of gender, age, disability and other factors, and providing appropriate protections based on individual specific needs.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan welcomes UNHCR's efforts to enhance cooperation with external partners on complementary pathways. We are well aware of the value of complementary pathways that will contribute to solutions. In particular, Japan believes

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that ensuring opportunities for education for refugee youth is extremely important since they will play a vital role in the reconstruction and development of their own countries.

From this perspective, Japan has been steadily implementing programs to provide educational opportunities for young Syrians since 2016. In addition to the governmental programs, Japanese universities have also been providing refugee youth with educational opportunities through the Refugee Higher Education Program (RHEP). In 2021, two universities will newly join the program. Higher educational opportunities for refugee youth are expanding in Japan. We appreciate UNHCR's cooperation in this regard.

Mr. Chairman,

We are highly concerned at the large increase of IDPs over the past year. UNHCR's role in protecting IDPs is becoming increasingly important. Japan recognizes the importance of cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders to address the issue of internal displacement. In this regard, we appreciate UNHCR's commitment to cooperating with the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement. Japan also appreciates UNHCR's efforts to strengthen its preparedness and response to IDP crises by finalizing the PPIE (Preparedness package for IDP emergencies) and qualifying first responders dedicated to IDP emergencies.

Mr. Chairman,

Japan believes that the humanitarian-development nexus is a key tool to mitigate the burden on host countries. Japan appreciates UNHCR's work to strengthen partnerships with the World Bank, IMF, regional development banks and OECD in this regard. As a member of the Core Group of the SSAR Support Platform, Japan would like to contribute to solutions to the Afghan refugee situation by promoting the nexus approach.

Thank you.