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Statement by Japanese Government

Thank you Chair, Director General, and Distinguished Delegates. I am HANYUDA Takashi, State Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan. It is my great honor and privilege to deliver this statement today on behalf of the Government of Japan.

I am pleased to congratulate the ILO on holding this ILC in a fully in-person format for the first time in four years, after overcoming various difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic, under the leadership of the new Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo.

We are delighted to meet face-to-face again with the distinguished tripartite leaders to discuss the important issues on this year's agenda. I would like to thank the Director-General and the ILO staff for their efforts in organizing this conference.

Let me start my statement by sharing some important outcomes of the G7 Kurashiki Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting that Japan chaired this year.

At this meeting, the G7 countries shared the recognition that structural changes such as demographic change, digital transformation, and green transformation increase the importance of investment in human capital. The members concurred that re-skilling is not only a way to improve workers' ability to cope with such structural changes, but also a way to improve productivity and raise wages, and that re-skilling is not a "cost" but an "investment." The Ministerial Declaration that came out of the meeting clearly states our mission to advance investment in human capital in order to realize a virtuous cycle of social and economic vitality and the health and well-being of workers.

We believe that this investment in human capital is crucial for every country to "seek and realize social justice," the theme of the DG's report, amid various structural changes. Japan will continue to make concerted efforts in partnership with the ILO, social partners, and

government counterparts to steadily implement the measures launched in this G7 Labour and Employment Ministerial Declaration.

Next, I would like to express Japan's view on the DG's report. In the report, "social justice" includes not only labour issues, but also a wide range of areas such as medical care and social insurance. The report also underlines that this broad range of social protection and the realization of decent work are interrelated.

Japan has made every effort to guarantee universal human rights through its social security system, including its comprehensive health insurance system with universal coverage, and has at the same time striven to realize decent work for all workers. We believe these efforts have contributed to the realization of social justice in Japan. These experiences were the impetus behind our support for the Global Coalition for Social Justice, which aims for policy coherence in various policy areas.

Taking the liberty of further introducing some of our specific measures,

I would like to touch upon some ways in which we have recently strengthened our efforts in the areas of employment of people with disabilities and promotion of women's activities.

First, I would like to note that legal amendments were enacted last December in the aim of realizing a system that enables people with disabilities to live in their communities and work at their workplaces in their own way and according to their own will. The amendments include the enhancement of support for the diverse employment needs of persons with disabilities and of the quality of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.

On top of that, to promote women's active participation in the workplace, from April 2022 we applied the obligation for companies to make an action plan on women's active participation to a broader range of companies than previously. In this area, we are also currently working to promote disclosure of information by companies on wage differences between men and women, and to promote the uptake of postnatal paternity leave.

In addition to these domestic policy efforts, I would like to emphasize that this year marks the 50th year of the ILO-Japan Multi-Bilateral Programme, which aims for the realization of decent work. The programme promotes the improvement of occupational safety and health standards, the development of social insurance systems, and various other forms of technical assistance, in accordance with the actual conditions and needs of recipient countries. Through these kinds of technical cooperation, the programme also contributes to solving challenges in global supply chains.

As one of the original member states of the ILO, Japan has been working on various other measures related to labour and employment, and we are confident that each of these measures contributes to the realization of decent work, which in turn leads to the realization of social justice.

The Government of Japan will continue to place special emphasis on social dialogue and make every effort to address persistent challenges

in the world of work.

Thank you for your kind attention.