**Draft statement by Attorney Naoko URAOKA**

**(Attorney/ Deputy Director from Foreign Policy Bureau of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan)**

**Permanent Representative of Japan**

**to the International Organizations in Vienna**

**on Agenda item (d) Other crime prevention and criminal justice matters: Human Trafficking,**

**16th May 2018**

Mr. Chairperson,

Human trafficking is a serious violation of human rights and grave transnational crime, the concern for which is deeply entrenched in the international community. Because recovery of both physical and mental damage of the victims is extremely difficult, a timely and appropriately conscientious approach is necessary.

Mr. Chairperson,

Against the backdrop of such concern, the Government of Japan formulated the “National Action Plan against Trafficking in Persons in 2014”. This Plan has been put into action since the end of 2014 as part of the efforts towards making “Japan, the Safest in the World” for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, which we will host in Tokyo in 2020, to act appropriately in human trafficking situations and take comprehensive and encompassing countermeasures in countering human trafficking as a whole.

Mr. Chairperson,

Last July, Japan ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC). Later, but in the same month, we also signed the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air – both supplementing the UNTOC. The delay of our signing the Protocols was unfortunate, however, I would like to stress that we enforced and implemented national policies and measures in line with these two Protocols even before signing them.

Mr. Chairperson,

Japan has been making efforts to tackle human trafficking in close cooperation with the international community by sharing information and developing dialogues on the protection and facilitation of return assistance for victims. We also proactively support such projects and activities countering human trafficking enforced by organizations, including United Nations organizations, through funding to the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Office for Migration (IOM), and the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS). We will continue these efforts in our attempt to propel measures to counter human trafficking as a State Party of the Protocol.

(Closing remarks)

Mr. Chairperson,

In closing, I would like to reaffirm Japan’s staunch commitment in combating human trafficking. As a host country for the upcoming Congress to be held in Kyoto in 2020, Japan will continue to play an active role in strengthening crime prevention and criminal justice, including on the fight against human trafficking.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

(END)