

10 November, 2006

Statement of Honorable Eita Yashiro
Member of House of Representatives, Japan

4th session of the Ad Hoc Committee
on Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

New York, 2 September 2004

Thank you very much, chairperson. Distinguished delegates, it is my great honor to address this fourth session of the Ad Hoc Committee.

First let me express my sincere appreciations to you all for your tireless efforts on the convention, which have been our challenge and our dream. An international convention on the rights of persons with disabilities, which is very strong and effective, has been our dream. My wish is that we have a good and powerful convention without delay.

I have been following this convention process and noted that we have consensus in many important areas for us. Of course, there are areas of controversy. They include reasonable accommodation, education, international cooperation and monitoring, among others. But under the able leadership of Ambassador Gallegos and Ambassador McKay and cooperation and flexibility from Member States, I am sure we can reach consensus.

As a person with disability, I emphasize self-determination. Self-determination is our highest priority. We do not want a life of pity. We may have different kinds of jobs. We have different places of living. But the most important thing is that we can make our own choices.

If we find barriers to our decisions and choices, it is the work of the state to remove these barriers. This convention is one of the means to do so.

As a member of parliament, I am taking an initiative to start a parliamentarian's league for the promotion of convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in Japan this fall. The convention is expected to have a strong impact nationally. At the last session of the parliament this year, Basic Law for Persons with Disabilities was revised to include an article on prohibition of disability discrimination. It was also revised to have more representation of people with disabilities in policy-making.

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In your further work on controversial issues, I ask you to listen to our voices, voices of disabled people. Yes, we are experts of disability issues. I myself have been a wheelchair user for 30 years. In this conference room, I know and we know the reality of the world surrounding us. People with disabilities meeting here are all experts. When this Ad Hoc Committee is entering a critical stage of negotiation, our experiences are essential. For this convention to be useful, the participation of disabled people is essential.

This convention should not be a pie in the sky. This convention should not become another paper. Many people with disabilities around the world look forward to this convention with great expectations. We are the lucky ones who can meet here. But let us not forget those who cannot.

We are proud to be disabled people and we continue to seek peace.

Let us create bigger space for people with disabilities to make more contributions to the community, through this convention.

In closing, let me thank you for this opportunity to make a statement. And I conclude by saying "nothing about us without us". Thank you.