**Japan’s submission in response to co-facilitators’ letter dated 17 June 2020**

1. **Introduction**

Japan firmly believes that full and effective implementation of international human rights treaties is of major importance to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms. The human rights treaty bodies play a unique and critical role in this regard and their effective functioning is indispensable.

The three Reports of the UN Secretary-General based on General Assembly resolution 68/268 have revealed that while ratifications of human rights treaties are ever increasing, States' reporting compliance remains low and the treaty bodies are facing a large number of backlog of reports. Japan believes that we must take concrete actions to ensure effective, efficient and sustainable functioning of the treaty bodies so that this unique system we have developed over the years could be maintained.

Japan’s proposals below are based on this viewpoint. We are determined to work with other Member States, civil societies, and treaty bodies to agree on a series of strong, clear, concrete, and effective recommendations. The proposals are non-exhaustive and Japan is open and willing to discuss other possible measures to strengthen the treaty bodies with all the stakeholders.

1. **Japan’s proposals to strengthen the treaty bodies**

1. In order to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of treaty body system, Japan proposes **treaty bodies** to adopt the following measures:

1. **Dialogue between States and treaty bodies** (Co-facilitator’s point 6)

**[Proposal]**

Create an opportunity for informal dialogues between States and treaty bodies.

**[Expected Advantages]**

Enable the treaty body members to better understand the diverse legal, social, judicial, and administrative systems and situations related to specific human rights issues in each country, thereby facilitating the formulation of fact-based recommendations to effectively improve human rights situations on the ground.

1. **Functioning of the treaty body system** (Co-facilitator’s point 1)

**[Proposal]**

Adopt country-specific task force system in each treaty body. One of the roles of task forces for a specific country will be to discuss and coordinate the content of each treaty body’s list of issues (LOI) to avoid unnecessary duplication. (As a result of the coordination among task forces, one treaty body might be designated to mainly take up a specific issue.)

**[Expected Advantages]**

Enable treaty bodies to have more time for a focused and in depth dialogue on issues pertaining to their respective core mandates.

Enhance the efficiency of the treaty body system as a whole.

1. **Coordination and predictability** (Co-facilitator’s point 4)

**[Proposal]**

Develop coordinated fixed calendars for respective treaty bodies, which harmonizes the cycles of other treaty bodies’ review and the Universal Periodic Review.

**[Expected Advantages]**

Help States and civil society better prepare for and engage in the reporting process.

1. **Harmonization and alignment of working methods** (Co-facilitator’s point 3)

**[Proposal 1]**

Set a cap on the number of questions and the amount of time allotted to each treaty body members.

**[Expected Advantages]**

Promote focused dialogues on prioritized issues between treaty bodies and States.

**[Proposal 2]**

Notify States of topics to be discussed in a dialogue in advance (for example, one month before)

**[Expected Advantages]**

Enable state parties to specify the most suitable persons as member of the delegation, which will reduce the logistics burden and costs. (While it is unrealistic to discuss all issues in LOI which covers a wide range of topics during dialogue, state parties need to dispatch large delegations to be able to appropriately respond to all the possible questions from a treaty body under the current system.)

Enable state parties to better prepare for focused areas treaty bodies have concern about, enhancing the quality of the dialogue as well as reducing the burden of state parties.

Motivate state parties to respond to LOI if such notification will be made to only state parties submitting the response for LOI in advance.

2. In order to strengthen the impartiality and diversity of treaty body system (Co-facilitators’ point 12), Japan proposes **State Parties** to agree on standard requirements for its members, including, *inter alia*, the legal background.