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**Human Rights Council
8th session (2-18 June 2008)
Item 6: Consideration of UPR-report on Japan**

**Statement jointly delivered by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), and
the Asia-Japan Women's Resource Center (AJWRC)**

Mr President, Honourable Members of the Human Rights Council,

OMCT and AJWRC warmly welcome the comprehensive examination by the Human Rights Council of the human rights situation in Japan, including gender-based violence and discrimination against women.

We also welcome the fact that the Japanese State has expressed its determination, as a re-elected member of the Council, to implement its obligations under the human rights instruments and to address "situations of violation of human rights, including gross and systematic violations" worldwide in its voluntary pledges and commitments.

We expect the Japanese State to prove its commitment in this regard by addressing the "gross and systematic violations" of women's human rights for which it is responsible, namely Japan's military sexual slavery during World War II, as mentioned in paragraphs 15, 26, 32, 37 and 60 (al. 5 and 18) of the report of the Working Group¹. Since the victims broke the decades of silence, a number of recommendations have been made by the international human rights bodies, including CEDAW and CAT. According to CAT, sexual violence and slavery in this context amount to torture and no statute of limitations should apply "that may prevent investigation, prosecution and punishment of these grave crimes." It also considered that the remedies provided so far to the victims of military sexual slavery were inadequate and called on Japan to stop the "continuing abuse and re-traumatization" that result from "official denial of the facts, concealment or failure to disclose other facts, failure to prosecute those criminally responsible for acts of torture, and failure to provide adequate rehabilitation to the victims and survivors."² However to date, the Japanese State has not acted on any of these recommendations, while a number of survivors have passed away without obtaining justice.

We call on Japan to urgently act on all recommendations including those on military sexual slavery without reservation, and set a best practice in ensuring remedies for the survivors of the most serious forms of violence against women in armed conflict. Otherwise, its failure to do so will raise serious doubt as to its ability to act as a responsible member of the Council.

Thank you.

¹During the review of Japan on May 9, several countries [France, the Republic of Korea, China, the Netherlands and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea] called on Japan to respond sincerely to the recommendations of the UN human rights mechanisms as well as the international community, and two related recommendations are included in the conclusion.

² Further, in recent years, the United States, Canada, the European Union, the Netherlands and the Philippines have also passed resolutions urging Japan to apologize and provide redress for victims of these serious human rights violations.

