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THE INTERNATIONAL MOVEMENT AGAINST ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AND RACISM

IMADR Oral Statement, Human Rights Council 17th Session

Item 3: Interactive Dialogue with SR on migrants

31 May 2011

Thank you Mr. President

Together with the Solidarity Network with Migrants Japan, IMADR would like to welcome the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants. We also appreciate his analyses and recommendations regarding his visit to Japan where he engaged in many meetings with more than two hundred people including migrant workers and their families. We would like to express our full support of his efforts and our commitment in doing our best to realize his recommendations in Japanese society.

As mentioned in his report, migration has become a permanent reality in Japan. When the great earthquake and tsunami hit Japan on March 11, about 75, 000 migrants were in the affected area; however, the situation surrounding these foreign residents has hardly been brought up in the media. These migrants are facing specific difficulties. For example, many migrant workers are without health insurance, and some migrant children have had to give up going to school, while many migrant women suffer from the break-up of their ethnic communities. Under these circumstances, there is a dire need to ensure that foreign residents are not discriminated against in regards to the provision of aid and assistance.

Mr. President,

In Japan there are local governments such as the municipality of Fukui city that maintain policies that do not allow foreign residents who do not speak Japanese well to access public housing. We hope that Fukui city, as well as all other local governments, will eliminate discrimination against non-citizens and harmonize their policies in accordance with the Special Rapporteur's recommendation that [quote] *"the Government should prevent and punish discrimination against migrants in access to housing. Any public practice that limits the access of migrants and their families to public housing facilities should be eradicated"* (A/HRC/17/33/Add.3, paragraph 83 (b)).

Finally, Mr. President,

We would like to reiterate that the needs of migrants and their communities are not always properly and adequately represented – especially in the aftermaths of devastating catastrophes and natural disasters. Therefore, migrant communities are in dire need of support and empowerment, and we call upon international society to join us in not only recognizing the vulnerability of these communities, but also ensuring the provision of fair and adequate assistance.

Thank you, Mr. President

IMADR is an NGO in consultative status (Special) with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations