

## **Multifaceted Approach to Eliminating Racial Discrimination**

**IMADR: International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism**

**Intervention during Q&A**

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Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you very much for inviting me to this international symposium. My name is Hanzawa, and I serve as the Anti-Racial Discrimination Adviser at the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Regional Office for South-East Asia in Bangkok.

First of all, I would like to express my deep respect to the organizers, IMADR and the NGO Network for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (ERD Network), as well as to all members of Japan's civil society who have carried out steady and powerful efforts over many years toward the elimination of racial discrimination. Your efforts to bring the voices of affected communities to society and to persistently advocate for the need for institutional reform have played an essential role in creating international frameworks in the form of human rights treaties, building consensus, and translating these norms into the daily lives of individuals.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) is the core instrument in the international framework to eradicate racial discrimination. More than half a century has passed since it was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1965 and entered into force in 1969, yet its importance remains unchanged. As societies become increasingly diverse and new forms of exclusion and inequality become visible, the CERD Committee calls on States to undertake

wide-ranging measures, including legal and policy reforms, education, and awareness-raising.

In addition, the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted in Durban, South Africa, in 2001 and marking its 25th anniversary this year, is another key international framework for confronting historical and structural discrimination and the legacies of colonialism, and for realizing a world free from racism. The Durban Declaration is not merely a document for reflecting on the past; it sheds light on persistent forms of exclusion in contemporary society and clearly outlines the challenges that countries must address collectively. This 25th anniversary provides an important opportunity to take stock of our progress and to further strengthen our efforts.

For OHCHR, the principles of equality and non-discrimination are among the pillars of our work. In the Office's Management Plan for 2024–2027, an important expected outcome is that States establish laws and policies that prohibit all forms of discrimination and comprehensively address inequality. Priority areas include analysis of inequality from an intersectional perspective, strengthening judicial and non-judicial remedies, gender equality, enhanced engagement with civil society, and addressing racial discrimination and its historical structures.

To ensure that such international frameworks translate into domestic change, the role of civil society is indispensable. IMADR and the ERD Network have long worked to make the voices of affected communities visible, to provide policy recommendations, and to promote the domestic application of international human rights standards in Japan. Today's session also gave us an opportunity to learn from the advocacy efforts in Republic of Korea, where there is a very active civil society. Such efforts embody the very idea of "promoting human rights at the local level," which the United Nations places

great emphasis on. They demonstrate in practice how international standards can be rooted in domestic contexts.

In this regard, the long-standing work of the Japan Association of Human Rights Law for non-Citizens and other civil society groups—such as the “Model Law on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination,” one of today’s symposium topics—represents an important initiative toward domestic reform. Their diligent advocacy for legal reform, research, policy recommendations, and network-building has laid a critical foundation.

Moreover, the enactment of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law—an issue under discussion in Japan for many years—is a key recommendation repeatedly made by the CERD Committee and a measure strongly encouraged by OHCHR worldwide. A comprehensive anti-discrimination law provides not only remedies for victims but also a preventive and coherent framework for society as a whole to address discrimination. In 2023, OHCHR and the Equal Rights Trust published “A Practical Guide to Developing Comprehensive Anti-Discrimination Legislation”, which is available in Japanese through IMADR’s support with translation. Both Japan and Korea have active civil society movement advocating for adoption of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law, and it is an encouraging development to see a draft Anti-Discrimination Bill being introduced to the Parliament in Korea.

Eliminating racial discrimination cannot be achieved by passing a single law. It requires international standards, government measures, civil society’s voices, and the lived experiences of affected individuals to come together to create an environment in which rights are protected and effective remedies are available when rights are violated. To this end, it is crucial for policymakers, civil society, researchers, educational institutions, and international organizations to work collaboratively and bring together their respective expertise and perspectives.

OHCHR remains committed to supporting the dissemination of international human rights standards and the advancement of institutional reforms, and we look forward to deepening our cooperation with all of you to build a future in Japan—and in our wider region—where no one is left behind.

I sincerely hope that today's discussions will serve as a catalyst for further progress in Japan's efforts to eliminate racial discrimination.

Thank you very much.