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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement* submitted by Japanese Workers' Committee for Human Rights, a non governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[2nd July 2004]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

While we, are newly given its consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council, we have a long history of activator on human rights issues in general and economic, social, cultural rights in particular.

At our first appearance in an international forum on human rights such as the Sub-Commission on Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Geneva in 1993, we were at a loss without a slightest knowledge of proceedings in this forum. We came here when we failed to get fair and just judgments from Japanese courts. We came here with a disappointment to find no sincere words given by our own government in term with promotion and protection of human rights in work place.

Since then, we have successfully had some of our claims heard and solved fairly in courtrooms and elsewhere in our country. It is really a great leap for us and others who have suffered from unjust, unfair and discriminating treatments as workers, teachers, public agents, cabin attendants, researchers, engineers, and so on. But even today many of our friends, workers are still suffering from the same unjust and unfair treatments. Or even more in number, or even worse in quality of life.

We would like to ask you, distinguished experts of the Sub-Commission, why such things continue, why such abuses have no remedy, and why such discrimination is disregarded. Is it a civilized society, which gives no protection for a teacher against his principal's unlawful intervention into free opinion by breaking pages out of a high school student booklet solely because the principal found them unpleasant? It is Mr. Matsumot's case. At closing his long career in a high school, he wrote a memory on a study tour to Hiroshima, one of the two cities destroyed by atomic bombs, with a short comment on the unconstitutionality of the Self-Defence Forces. A district court gave no good mark to his claim for damages. Plenty numbers of other cases are now printed in a booklet "People's Voice from Japan, 2004."

It is clear that judges and government officers are very reluctant to learn much from international instruments on human rights. The government also fails to comply with the UN General Assembly Resolution on "National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights" (A/RES/48/134). Furthermore the government is too slow to open a way of communications from individuals claiming to be victims of any of the rights set forth by the International Covenant of Political and Civil Rights of 1966 (2200/XXI). Workers and other victims in Japan are still shut out of a long way to Geneva.

We need effective and fair protection of human rights. We need our economic, social and cultural rights be respected. We need a good protocol of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
