**Opening statement of Mikiko Otani, Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

**at Public Opening of the 90th session of the Committee on the Rights of the Child**

**3 May 2022**

I would like to express deep concern about continuing grave violations of the rights of children in Ukraine. We are seriously disturbed by the atrocity and extreme harm caused to children on a large scale. The Committee will continue to address this issue in coordination with the OHCHR, other treaty bodies and relevant United Nations bodies. The Committee will also discuss more generally how it should respond to gross violation of children’s rights in conflict and other situations in all parts of the world. Our mandate is for all children under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is a universal human rights treaty adopted by the UN General Assembly and ratified by 196 States of all regions. Universal realization of rights of every child in all countries is far from reality. Denial and violation of children’s rights are occurring everywhere. Pandemic, conflict, climate change and various crisis exacerbate existing discrimination, poverty and structural problems and disproportionately affect children, in particular, in developing countries and in vulnerable situations. The mandate entrusted to our Committee is enormous.

Country reviews is a fundamental tool for the Committee to exercise its monitoring mandate to address whole range of children’s rights in a comprehensive, holistic and country-specific manner in each and every State party. We are pleased to have returned to the in-person reviews and appreciate the decision of High Commissioner for Human Rights and Director General of the UN Office at Geneva to accept our request to add one week each to the current and the next session, which will allow us to increase country reviews. However, exceptional online review for those States who cannot travel to Geneva are shortened to four hours instead of six hours due to unavailability of interpretation. A huge backlog of country review accumulated during COVID-19 situation is a serious concern causing monitoring gap for children but remains unresolved. Furthermore, the work for Individual complaint and inquiry procedures requires additional meeting time and funding. It is absolutely essential for the Committee to be provided necessary financial and staff support to effectively fulfill our mandate for children of the world. Secretary-General, in “A Call to Action for Human Rights”, identified the need to develop a funding strategy to provide financial stability for the human rights treaty bodies. We count on the strong support and concrete steps taken by the OHCHR and the Secretary-General to make such funding strategy reality. During the 89th session, the Committee adopted an important decision to move towards a predictable review cycle of 8 years with a mid-term follow up procedures and the standard simplified reporting procedure. To materialize this decision and resolve backlog and other problems, the Committee will prepare for the upcoming 34th meeting of Chairpersons.

Allow me to reiterate that mainstreaming children’s rights at all levels including in the whole United Nations system is indispensable to achieve full and universal realization of children’s rights. In this regard, we are grateful for the speakers from ILO, OHCHR, UNEP and UNICEF together with the civil society partner Child Rights Connect to address at the opening of the present session today. The Committee will continue to strengthen cooperation with UN bodies and agencies through dialogue, consultation, participation in the meetings, joint statements and co-organizing events, etc. The Committee will also support and intend to engage in the ongoing process of developing a UN Guidance Note on child rights mainstreaming, which is a crucial and practical step to make children’s rights agenda more visible and systematically integrated into all areas of the work of the United Nations.

I thank you for your kind attention.

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