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HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL  
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### **PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS, CIVIL, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT**

**Written statement\* submitted by the Japanese Workers' Committee for Human Rights (JWCHR), 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.

[23 May 2008]

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

### **Aiming for the Expansion of a scholarship system and Introduction of free secondary and higher education**

According to the “Global Higher Education Ranking 2005” edited by the Educational Policy Institute (EPI) located both in Washington, D.C. and in Toronto, Japan has been indicated as a country where a personal expense burden is the heaviest, as a result of having compared internationally with school expenses, living costs and scholarships for higher education of 16 developing countries and regions.

At present, the first year’s fee of payment of university is exceeding 820,000 yen for a national university and 1,300,000 yen for a private one that a young man/a student is complaining one after another, such as “Although I passed an university, I abandoned it by reason of being unable to pay an entrance fee,” “I gave up the idea of going to university, because I could not pay the tuition,” and “I cannot concentrate on the study due to being pressed by work.”

As a system of guaranteeing the “equal opportunity of education” in Japan, there is a scholarship system of the Japan Student Services Organization. One in three students makes use of it now, however, the scholarship in Japan is not an allowance system but a loan one with obligation of paying back. The scholarship without interest had been a fundamental system, but in recent years, the scholarship with interest has been increasing and 70 percent of its business expenses have become “with interest.” The loan amount rises so large that, in case of borrowing 120,000 yen per month during four-year registration of university, the total amount of the debt reaches 7,660,000 yen (in case of 3 percent interest). The average annual income of a person in his early twenties (20~25 years old) is 2,510,000 yen (“Statistical survey of actual status for salary in the private sector” by National Tax Agency 2006) that he/she is obliged to assume a debt of 3 times of the annual income at the time of graduation.

Under the circumstances of such employment where a stable income is not guaranteed even after graduation, those who are at a standstill for repayment have increased by reason of unemployment and low income. And during between fiscal year 2000 and 2005, delinquents have rapidly increased by 1.29 times and arrears by 1.7 times. But the Japanese government holds down its financial expenses for higher education to only 0.5 %, which is the lowest rate among the members of OECD (average rate of its members:1.1 % - “International comparison of education index 2007” by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and technology), and is strengthening its movement toward the “privatization of loan” with the increase of a burden of private expense, defining a public scholarship as “finance”, and also having the intention of abolishing an upper limit of the rate of interest (3 %) of scholarship.

The Japanese government displays the “enrichment of scholarship” as one of the reasons that it “reserves” to ratify Article 13.2 (b) (c) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which stipulates a gradual introduction of free secondary and higher education, but, as a real situation mentioned above, the scholarship system in Japan has not yet realized an “equal opportunity”. In order that a young man/a student may take education in peace, it is requested to introduce an allowance scholarship system which requires no repayment, not a loan system burdening him in future. And to take a step toward free education is the subject which is required urgently.

The government has not yet submitted its report on ICESCR to the Committee, which was due in 2006. For the Human Rights Council and the Treaty bodies, we would like to demand pressure to the Japanese government in order to carry out its international responsibility corresponding to its economic power, expecting that Japan should withdraw the “reservation”, guarantee the “right to education” and realize the “equal opportunity of education” as early as possible.

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