Madam Chair,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished delegates and Participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure and honour to be given the opportunity to speak at this meeting which undertakes a midpoint review of the progress made in the implementation of the Asia and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities, 2013-2022, and the “Incheon Strategy”. I would like to express my appreciation to the ESCAP secretariat and the Government of China for their initiative in organizing this important milestone meeting.

The Government of Japan has actively promoted the three successive Asia and Pacific Decades of Persons with Disabilities, 1993-2002, 2003-2012 and the current Decade of 2013-2022, by co-sponsoring all the relevant resolutions for these three Decades.

Madam Chair,

I am pleased to report that Japan’s efforts on persons with disabilities
over the past five years have achieved consistent results. For example, Japan ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in January 2014 and submitted the first government report to the United Nations in June 2016. In this connection, we have established domestic laws to protect the rights of persons with disabilities, such as the establishment of "The Act on the Elimination of Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities". We are also enhancing and strengthening support for persons with developmental disabilities, such as supporting the training of medical professionals to enable early detection and early treatment of developmental disorders. In order to strengthen disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction, we are strengthening our disaster support system, such as the preparation and utilization of lists of persons needing active evacuation support, and promoting improvements to the living environment of shelters. Besides that, the number of persons with disabilities employed in private companies and the number of them recruited through Public Employment Security Offices have increased.

Madam Chair,

Japan hosted the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in March 2015 which adopted the "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030". This clearly recognizes the importance of persons with disabilities and constitutes a significant achievement in promoting efforts to ensure the safety of persons with disabilities in future disaster risk reduction. We are also continuing to support the promotion of disaster risk reduction for persons with disabilities in the Asia-Pacific region as a whole, including the development of an e-learning tool on disability-inclusive disaster risk reduction through voluntary contributions to ESCAP. Based on bilateral cooperation (technical cooperation, grant aid and loan aid cooperation) and through the other international organizations, based on the needs of developing countries, Japan is
implementing various types of support for persons with disabilities, such as improvement of education for children with disabilities and promotion of social participation of differently-abled persons.

Madam Chair,

In order to achieve sustainable development, the potential of each individual should be fulfilled based on human security. A society where all people respect each other regardless of disability must be realized. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a principle of which is “leaving no one behind”, also includes the viewpoints of persons with disabilities. Implementation of the Inchon strategy, whose 10 goals are interrelated with SDGs is important in this regard.

Last but not least, the Government of Japan will actively implement domestic and international policies for persons with disabilities over the next 5 years in close coordination with the ESCAP secretariat and other member states.

Thank you for your kind attention.