

**Statement by Ambassador Tsukasa Kawada
Representative of the Government of Japan
Ambassador in charge of Countering Terrorism and Organized Crime**

**At the Special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee with
Member States and international and regional organizations on
“Stemming the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters”**

28 July 2015

Mr. Chair

H.E. Mr. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

H.E. Mr. Minister of Interior

Mr. Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Committee

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of Spain and the Counter-Terrorism Committee for organizing this important meeting on “Stemming the Flow of Foreign Terrorist Fighters”, at this critical juncture when the international community is facing serious challenges posed by terrorism.

At the beginning of this year, the Government of Japan confronted inhuman and inadmissible acts conducted by ISIL against Japanese citizens. ISIL took two Japanese as hostages, demanded a tremendous amount of ransom and finally killed them. The horrible scene was shown on video over the Internet. We faced another challenge two months later, when three Japanese were among the 22 victims of a terrorist attack which took place at a museum in Tunis.

In the wake of these tragic events, Prime Minister Shinzo ABE has shown unbending determination to fight against terrorism. The Government of Japan has now a newly formulated policy consisting of three pillars to address terrorism. First, to strengthen counter-terrorism measures internally and externally; second, to enhance cooperation towards stability and prosperity in the Middle East; and third, to create societies resilient to radicalization.

Mr. Chair,

The international community has so far made incessant efforts to counter terrorism by using force, concluding international treaties, adopting UN resolutions and strengthening cooperation in counter-terrorism measures. However, we have been facing new kinds of threats one after another, and one of the most serious problems we now face is Foreign Terrorist Fighters. How to prevent young people from being radicalized and participating in ISIL is a significant challenge for our society.

To our knowledge, there is no Japanese national who has joined ISIL as a FTF at this moment. But, last October, we had a case where a university student plotted to travel to Syria with a view to participating in ISIL. Our authorities did stop him, having discovered his plot just before his departure. What is of particular interest in this case is that he is not Muslim. It seems that the student, just disgusted with society and sick of life, tried to seek another world, being fascinated by ISIL's propaganda on the Internet. This case shows one aspect of how and why young people are radicalized or fascinated by ISIL.

In the past, Japanese society was a target of a terrorist attack conducted by a religious sect called "Aum". This fanatic sect carried out a deadly sarin attack in the Tokyo subway system in 1995, killing 13 people and injuring about 6,000 others. The group had recruited a number of young people by fascinating them with fanatic thoughts and acts of its leader. It seems to me that there is a kind of similitude in mentality between young people attracted by ISIL and young people charmed by Aum. Young people tend to be very sensitive to a gap between what they are and what they are to be. A fanatic religion can penetrate into this kind of fragile and susceptible mind of young people who are not satisfied with their actual lives. It is critically important to take measures to address this state of mind of young people at various levels of society in order to prevent them from radicalizing.

Mr. Chair,

The Government of Japan has strongly supported the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178 which includes comprehensive measures to stem the flow of foreign terrorist fighters and has been firmly implementing it. As I mentioned earlier, we make extensive efforts to prevent Japanese citizens from travelling abroad for the purpose of participating in terrorist activities.

The Government of Japan also considers that international cooperation is a sine qua non to prevent travel of foreign terrorist fighters. In this regard, we wish to propose that PNR (Passenger Name Record) which includes the itinerary of a passenger, traveling companions, contact persons and others should be shared among the countries concerned. While privacy concerns require very careful consideration, I would like to emphasize that sharing PNR information is an effective way to control the movement of terrorists.

We have been helping to build the capacity of states to address threats posed by terrorism, including preventing the movement of foreign terrorist fighters across borders. We have recently pledged to contribute about 15.5 million dollars to enhance the capacity of North African and Middle Eastern countries in the field of criminal justice and border control in cooperation with the UNODC and other international organizations.

The Government of Japan has also been promoting cooperation with Southeast Asian countries, where a number of young people have now been recruited as FTF by ISIL. We have been conducting projects to protect youth from radicalization and other counter-terrorism projects through JAIF (Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund).

Mr. Chair,

During his visit to the Middle East this January, Prime Minister Abe gave a speech in Cairo entitled “The best way is to go in the middle”. Japanese traditional wisdom teaches us that we should behave in a moderate manner without going to extremes, so that we can live in a harmonious way within society. I understand this idea is widely appreciated in other civilizations, including the Islamic world, which has the same maxim of “Khair al-Umuri Ausatoha”. Prime Minister Abe appealed to the public to cherish this wisdom which our ancestors have cultivated from their experiences. I would like to reiterate that we should take advantage of this ancestral wisdom to foster a harmonious, inclusive society, stopping reckless people from turning to extremism and going to fight.

I would like to conclude my remarks by thanking once again the Government of Spain for hosting this important gathering with warm hospitality and by appreciating the initiative of Counter Terrorism Committee to eradicate this scourge from the earth.

Thank you.