

**Committee Against Torture Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Japan, adopted by the Committee at its fiftieth session (6-31 May 2013) (CAT/C/JPN/CO/2)**

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OVERVIEW: This concluding observation published on June 3, 2016, after the announcement of the 2015 Japan-South Korea Agreement, shows the initial confusion and conflicting responses of the international community, including the bodies of UN, regarding the nature and ramification of the verbal agreement, purportedly resolved the “comfort women” issue “finally and irreversibly.” Another UN body, Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) issued very different observation on the same 2015 Agreement.

1. In March 2015, the Government of Japan submitted the comments on the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee (CAT/C/JPN/CO/2). Regarding the issue of comfort women, there is a positive step after the submission. The additional information is as follows.
2. After intensive consultations between the Governments of Japan and the Republic of Korea on the issue of comfort women toward an early conclusion, the Foreign Ministers of both nations had a meeting on December 28 last year and reached an agreement on the issue. With this agreement, the two Governments confirmed that the issue of comfort women is resolved finally and irreversibly. Later on the same day, a phone call between the leaders of both nations was held and the leaders confirmed that both sides reached an agreement and honored such development.
3. What should be recognized is that the Government of Japan has been sincerely dealing with this issue such as through the Asian Women's Fund even before the most recent agreement. Building on such experience and under the most recent agreement, the following has been decided: first, the Government of the Republic of Korea establish a foundation for the purpose of providing support for the former comfort women; second, its fund of approximately 1 billion yen be contributed by the Government of Japan as a one-time contribution through its budget; and third, projects for recovering the honor and dignity and healing the psychological wounds of all former comfort women be carried out under the cooperation between the two Governments.
4. As each government is currently making efforts to faithfully implement (the content of) the agreement (see Attachment), the Government of Japan wishes to take this opportunity to ask for understanding from the international community on such efforts by the two Governments. In this regard, the Government of Japan would like to draw the attention of the Committee to the fact that the international community is now welcoming the agreement, as expressed by, for instance, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Attachment: Text of the 2015 Japan-South Korea Foreign Ministers' Joint Announcement