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## Statement by Mr. Baskut Tuncak, the Special Rapporteur for toxic and other hazardous material on the issues of Fukushima decontamination workers rights

At the 39<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (HRC) in Geneva on 12 Sep 2018

“In regards to the numerous comments on Fukushima affecting people that have been displaced as well as workers. I'd like to begin that every year under this mandate I have heard concerns regarding the situation in Fukushima – I have heard them since 2014 – and I have also heard requests from civil society for the government of Japan to extend to my mandate a visit an invitation / an official visit and I have yet to receive a response in that regard – I think this is unfortunate I think that it is an opportunity for both the government and affected communities to have their say and to raise the issues and find solutions and I would encourage the Japanese government to extend an invitation to my mandate as they have a standing invitation to all mandate holders.

There was a more specific question by one of the NGO representatives, from IADL, which is what should Japan do to implement principle 1 ? Principle 1 is that states have a duty to protect workers through the prevention of exposure. In my view Japan must do everything in its powers to protect all workers from occupational exposures, including workers who are doing their remediation work at Fukushima, whether at the power plant or in the surrounding countryside. Japan may wish to consider its policy of continuing to expose its workers to radiation based on the justification principle of the ICRP. The justification principle notes the importance for decisions that lead to radiation exposure to include a public consultation procedure, and to be justified with a net societal benefit. This seems particularly important in this situation because the return rates of populations with higher contamination areas, where workers will be exposed to higher levels of radiation, remain relatively low.

To conclude Mr President. the solutions to prevent and reduce exposure are in hand ...the solutions to prevent workers from being exposed have wider benefits for the whole society enabling workers to defend their rights leads to public health benefits for everyone. Workers rights are human rights and its long overdue that the global community acknowledges and recognizes the exposure of workers to toxic substances as a form of exploitation. Thank you.”