

Friends from both the corporate sector civil society, I welcome you all to CRT Japan's stakeholder engagement programme, the fourth of its kind to take place. I am encouraged that so many of you attend this multi-stakeholder programme, and are committed to creating a business environment that protects human rights.

As many, perhaps all, of you know, the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre is an international human rights NGO based in London, with an office in New York and 14 representatives all regions of the world. As an impartial actor, we work together with both civil society and companies to advance human rights in business, and track both challenges and positive steps taken by companies worldwide. I know that many of you have been in touch with Saul Takahashi, our representative based in Tokyo.

The focus of this year's stakeholder engagement programme on the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is very timely. I do not need to remind anybody that, in recent years, the human rights aspects of mega-sporting events have come under close scrutiny. The same will be true in Japan - the human rights performance of Japanese companies, both within the country and abroad, will be under very close scrutiny in the run up to, and during, the Olympics. The entire spectrum of human rights will be looked at, including labour rights throughout the supply chain, the treatment of foreign labourers and other foreign nationals in Japan, and sexual discrimination issues. It will be crucial that companies demonstrate that they have made a clear assessment of their major human rights risks and have plans to address them that demonstrate due diligence, including effective remedy: procedures that will enable persons to seek redress for abuse of their rights.

All of this means that 2020 will be an opportunity for real and lasting change – not simply cosmetic measures to weather the storm, but, rather, a lasting legacy of improvements in business and human rights. This change will have to come from the government of Japan, but it will also have to come from companies.

To our friends in the business sector, I believe that your participation in this stakeholder engagement programme demonstrates that you are already in the leadership of making this change happen: change that will bring long term benefits to your companies' risks and brand-reputation.

I hope that today greater collaboration emerges between business and civil society. Our

partners in civil society have valuable insights into the experience of workers, communities, and consumers on which your profits and reputation depend. As the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre, we have catalogued so many examples of cooperation that has brought enormous benefits to companies, as well as to the dignities and freedoms of people in their supply chains and operations.

Finally, let me bring to your attention that the Business and Human Rights Resource Centre will be co-hosting with CRT Japan an international conference on business and human rights, to take place this September in Tokyo. I look forward to continue working closely with you all, to further advance the cause of business and human rights.