

【Check Against Delivery】

**STATEMENT BY the Delegation of Japan,
Permanent Council, OSCE
15 February, 2024**

Madam Chair,

We are carefully and critically following the situation in Kosovo. And let me tell you that our Ambassador is visiting Kosovo and had fruitful discussions with President Osmani and Prime Minister Kurti.

Let me also be clear that Japan is committed to peace and stability on the Balkans and support fully the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia under the auspices of EU. We welcome the development made recently between Prime Minister Kurti and President Vucic and encourage both parties to continue engaging in this dialogue process.

As Japan delivered statement at the UN Security Council on 8th February, we note the recent regulation of the Kosovo Central Bank (KCB) on cash operations. This measure, we understand, was implemented as part of the fight against counterfeit money and money laundering, to ensure transparency of cash flows in Kosovo and respect it as part of Kosovo's inherent right as a sovereign state.

During our Ambassador's meeting with the Prime Minister Kurti, Ambassador Mizuuchi stressed the importance for Kosovo to maintain close consultation with the international community which has been supportive of Kosovo to date and also respect the right of ethnic minorities, in particular those who will be most affected by the measures taken in this regard. He expressed concerns over the Serbian civilian population who use the Serbian currency on a daily basis. The Ambassador called upon Kosovo to

take all necessary steps on the basis of the rule of law to accommodate the concerns of the international community.

We very much hope that Kosovo will pay due respect to the messages coming from Quint Embassies and other members of the international community to Kosovo to proceed with caution in order to avoid increasing tensions by addressing the impact of the regulation.

Madam Chair,

Taking this opportunity, we reiterate that the normalization of relations between the two countries through the EU-facilitated Belgrade-Pristina dialogue will contribute to peace and stability in the Western Balkans. In this regard, the issues raised today should also be discussed further in the framework of that dialogue.

In conclusion, Japan remains committed to supporting the international community's efforts to promote peace, stability, and reconciliation in the region. We stand ready to work with all stakeholders to achieve this goal.

I thank you.