

(EPA)

Statement by Tomoko Ukishima,

Parliamentary Vice-Minister of the Environment, Japan at Session 1

I believe that the development of Sustainable Development Goals is a very good opportunity for sharing the common vision among all countries, developed and developing countries alike, on the need to ensure sustainability within planetary boundaries. It is important to actively provide inputs from the perspective of the Asia-Pacific region for the adoption of post-2015 development agenda in September next year.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change indicates the following facts in its Fifth Assessment Report:

It is extremely likely that human influence has been the dominant cause of the observed warming since the mid-20th century

- In recent decades, changes in climate have caused impacts on natural and human systems on all continents and across the oceans.
- Delaying mitigation efforts beyond those in place today through 2030 is estimated to substantially increase the difficulty of the transition to low longer - term emissions levels and narrow the range of options consistent with maintaining temperature change below 2°C relative to pre-industrial levels.

As pointed out in the report, climate change is a serious threat to human security. Countries should make a serious effort to build a low-carbon society.

Our socio-economic system should also embrace the concept of sound material cycle. Japan welcomes the world-wide efforts toward "Sustainable Consumption and Production" through the concept of the 3Rs: Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle. We also recognize the value of the effort to improve the "resource productivity" that is measured as the efficiency to produce the economic value from limited natural resources, etc. We set goals and engaged in the effort to reach the goals.

Furthermore, our life and society should be in harmony with nature. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity are the central pieces of enhancing such harmony. We should focus our discussions mainly on achieving Aichi Target under the Convention on Biological Diversity. I would also like to

stress the importance of protecting not only pristine nature but also human-influenced nature such as agricultural land and secondary forest, formed and maintained through human activities. Therefore, we promote the SATOYAMA Initiative focusing on sustainable management of such human-influenced natural environments.

In realizing the sustainable society, I would also like to point to the importance of disaster risk reduction.

The Asia-Pacific region, which has suffered from damages from natural disasters, has led international cooperation on disaster risk reduction. It is important in the context of climate change also to ensure resilience against natural disasters.

A successor of the Hyogo Framework for Action will be adopted at the Third U.N. World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, a city heavily affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, in March 2015.

It is important to incorporate disaster risk reduction into post-2015 development agenda and to promote the mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction, taking this kind of opportunities.

Last but not least, I would like to mention the Education for Sustainable Development, ESD. Japan proposed the "United Nations Decade of ESD" at the Johannesburg Summit in September 2002, and this proposal was adopted unanimously at the General Assembly that December. The Decade started in January 2005.

We are in the final year of that Decade. Japan will host The UNESCO World Conference on ESD this November, which will review the global efforts aimed at each one of us becoming a builder of a sustainable society and discuss what action should be taken for promoting ESD after 2015. We are very happy to welcome your presence at the relevant conferences in Nagoya city and Okayama city.

I would therefore like to conclude my remarks with my hope that ESD be highlighted in the Sustainable Development Goals and in the educational programs in all countries of the world.