

**Statement by Mr. Kazuyuki Nakane,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the 71st Session of the United Nations Economic and Social
Commission for Asia and the Pacific
28 May 2015**

Chairperson,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

(Introduction)

Let me first congratulate the convening of this 71st session of the UN ESCAP.

On behalf of the people of Japan, let me also express my heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the affected people and the peoples of Vanuatu and Nepal respectively for the tragic loss of lives and devastation caused by the cyclone in Vanuatu in March this year and the earthquakes in Nepal in April this year.

The Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR) held in Sendai in March this year and the Seventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting held in Iwaki last week were successfully convened with many participants from relevant countries. Let me take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude.

(Sustainable Development and Disaster Risk Reduction)

The theme of this session of the commission is “Balancing the three dimensions of sustainable development: from integration to implementation.” Today I would like to give my remarks focusing on disaster risk reduction, which encompasses the three dimensions of sustainable development.

Disasters are indeed an enormous threat to sustainable development as they can wipe out national development achievement instantly. The tragedies in Vanuatu and Nepal clearly reminded us of this fact. The WCDRR adopted the “Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030,” which is an international guideline for disaster risk reduction for the next 15 years. Disaster risk reduction is an urgent agenda in

advancing sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, where large-scale disasters frequently occur. At the WCDRR, Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced the "Sendai Cooperation Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction," which includes cooperation totaling to 4 billion US dollars and the training of 40 thousand personnel for disaster risk reduction and post-disaster reconstruction in the coming four years. Japan will promote active cooperation for disaster risk reduction in the Asia-Pacific region also based on this initiative. In the wake of cyclone that hit Vanuatu during the WCDRR, Japan immediately decided to provide emergency assistance goods for Vanuatu and conveyed this decision to the President of Vanuatu; and we also decided to provide grant assistance for recovery and reconstruction. In the wake of earthquakes in Nepal, Japan immediately dispatched Japan Disaster Relief Team, provided emergency grant assistance and dispatched a research team to assist mid- to long-term reconstruction of Nepal. Japan will provide seamless assistance from emergency and humanitarian assistance to recovery and reconstruction assistance based on the concept of "Build Back Better," which is incorporated in the Sendai Framework. In addition, Japan will strengthen its assistance for disaster risk reduction efforts by ESCAP, which has good understanding in the regional needs.

(World Tsunami Day)

I have a proposal in relation to disaster risk reduction: to designate the 5th of November as "World Tsunami Day" by the end of this year.

The Sendai Framework mentions early warning system and the use of traditional knowledge and practices in addition to preparedness for disasters. These are important in taking precautionary measures against tsunami. From this perspective, the establishment of "World Tsunami Day" would be certainly a follow-up of the WCDRR.

The issue of tsunami is a common challenge for the Member States of ESCAP, which share the Pacific Ocean. The best way to prevent the damages of tsunami is preparedness and prompt dissemination of information, namely "early warning." The proposal of the "World Tsunami Day" is based on a Japanese famous anecdote that a villager, who anticipated a big tsunami from traditional knowledge, evacuated the villagers and saved their lives in the wake of a large earthquake on 5

November 1854. We believe that further increasing global awareness on the threat of tsunami and measures against tsunami through establishing such an international day will reduce the number of victims by tsunami, which has brought tragedies to many countries, and lead to the achievement of the target of the Sendai Framework.

Japan will make its utmost efforts to contribute to minimizing the damage caused by tsunami and thereby protecting as many precious lives as possible by utilizing its knowledge and technology it has accumulated. We would be grateful if we could have your support and cooperation for the establishment of "World Tsunami Day."

(Post-2015 Development Agenda)

This year is the deadline of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 development agenda is expected to be adopted at the UN Summit in September. In order to realize sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region, it is important to aim at formulating an agenda in line with the reality of the Asia-Pacific region including disaster risk reduction through sharing knowledge and technology of each country in the region and build a framework under global partnership including the private sector and civil society. Japan will take action toward the formulation of an appropriate agenda based on the concept of human security and in cooperation with each Member State of ESCAP. Let us join our hands to materialize real sustainable development.

Thank you.

