

**Speech by Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba
United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio + 20)**

Over 15 months have now passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11, 2011. Japan is steadily advancing along the path of reconstruction. In attending the largest international conference being held this year, I would like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the Japanese people, to express our gratitude for the generous and warm support and encouragement we received from all over the world.

The theme of Rio+20 has a special significance for Japan, in the wake of this unprecedented catastrophe. The Japanese people – witnesses to the overwhelming destructive power of the forces of nature – have a special responsibility to earnestly address the fundamental question “What is a sustainable society?” and to find a path, with the rest of the world, toward a society and civilization in harmony with nature.

Twenty years have gone by since the first Earth Summit was held here in Rio de Janeiro. In that time, many developing countries have achieved remarkable economic growth, newly industrializing economies have emerged, and the role of the private sector has become much larger. Today, with the diversification of actors in the international community, we must move beyond the old dichotomy of “developed countries” and “developing countries,” and have all stakeholders unite their strengths toward the common interests of global sustainable development.

To achieve sustainable development worldwide, it is important that each individual manifest his or her potential to the fullest and participate in building a better society. Based on this understanding of “human security,” Japan would like to implement three specific initiatives toward creating a “Green Future.”

The first is the “Future City” initiative. Japan will construct sustainable cities with superior environmental technologies, core infrastructure and resilience all over the world. Japan has many years of experience in advancing energy conservation and recycling. Based on that, the Japanese government is advancing the “Future City” model of urban planning with state-of-the-art environmental sustainability, strong disaster resilience and superb livability. We firmly believe this initiative will contribute to development in every country throughout the world. Japan will be holding an international conference on urban planning next year, and in the future we will invite

about 100 urban planners from developing countries to Japan to share successful examples of “Future Cities.”

Our second initiative is to organize the “Green Cooperation Volunteers” and cooperation regarding renewable energy. All countries need to work together toward the transition to a green economy using superior energy and resource efficiency. In order to achieve this, it is essential to develop human resources in the fields of environmental policy making and environmental technology. We will support the development of human resources in developing countries by organizing the new “Green Cooperation Volunteers” which will involve about 10,000 experts over three years. We will also support the transition to a green economy in developing countries, using Japan’s advanced renewable energy technologies. For that purpose, the Japanese government will provide \$3 billion to developing countries over the next three years.

The third initiative involves cooperation to reduce risk from catastrophic natural disasters. We are resolved to help build resilient societies worldwide, with sound awareness by their members of disaster reduction. Over the long course of history, Japan has gone through numerous natural catastrophes, and each time, has overcome them and recovered. We sincerely would like to share our experiences with the people of the world. With that aim, we will hold next month the World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku, the very region struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Japan will also provide \$3 billion in support to developing countries in the field of disaster reduction over the next three years.

I invite you to see the status of our recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake and experience Japan’s advanced energy-saving and resource-conservation technologies at the Japan Pavilion located nearby this conference hall, which has been themed “Japan green innovation – driving reconstruction, connecting with the world.”

We believe these approaches are extremely valuable for promoting development with a view toward sustainability, as we look forward the period beyond 2015, the current target date for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

An important aspect of ancient Japanese religious beliefs is the idea that every individual plant, animal and object has a (divine) spirit. The Japanese have always been grateful for the blessings of nature, and yet stood in awe of its ferocity. While sharing

the importance of this “coexistence with nature” with the people of the world, we seek to transform the crisis of the earthquake into an opportunity to share our sophisticated disaster-prevention technologies and highly disaster-resilient urban planning cultivated from that experience with the countries of the world. We believe that Japan can play a special role in achieving sustainable development in the world. We would like to open up a bright future for our children and future generations with the world leaders gathered at this conference.

Thank you.