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A Green Economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair,

Japan would like to share its view that a “transition to a green economy” is an effective and appropriate approach to achieve sustainable development. We believe that vital elements towards the building of a green economy include, inter alia, the internalization of environmental costs, green infrastructure development and technological innovation. Rio+20 should provide the opportunity for the international community to express its determination to make a transition to a green economy as well as to promote individual countries’ concrete policies which aim to achieve a green economy.

<Major Development in Japan>

As a major development in Japan towards a green economy, in December 2010, the Government decided on a policy package to tackle climate change which includes three major economic measures and the formulation of a comprehensive “Green Innovation Strategy,” which we have been working on ever since. The key concept of the decision is that technological innovation fosters “a win-win solution for issues related to environment, energy and economic growth.”

The three major economic measures are;

- (1) The introduction of a tax scheme for addressing global warming in October 2011;
- (2) The submission of relevant bills for an unlimited feed-in-tariff for renewable energy to the regular Diet session in 2011;
- (3) Deliberate consideration of a domestic emission trading system.

With regards to innovation, the government of Japan decided on the “New Growth Strategy” in June 2010, which emphasizes the need to stimulate the economy through green innovation of the environment and the utilization energy technology. To this end, Japan is to carry out various measures including 1) the promotion of renewable energy, 2) the facilitation of low-carbon finance and investment, 3) the application of

information and communication technology, 4) the usage of nuclear power, 5) the acceleration of R&D of innovative technology, 6) the promotion of modal shift, 7) the dissemination of energy-saving electrical appliances, 8) the enabling of efficient electricity demand, and 9) the recycling of domestic resources.

Another example is in the field of incentive measures. Japan is currently promoting green products through the so-called “eco-point scheme,” which is a kind of subsidy to consumers, as well as tax exemptions to enterprises to support environmental protection beyond regulations, and green public procurement.

<Key Elements of Green Economy>

In order to realize a green economy, Japan regards that the development of appropriate indicators is essential. We propose to develop four leading indicators that are to evaluate 1) the quality of life, 2) the GHG intensity, 3) resource intensity, and 4) biodiversity conservation. On this matter, the OECD provides us with good examples of green growth indicators. We expect that some synergy among the CSD and the OECD would improve the quality of discussions.

Mr. Co-Chair,

The transition to a green economy is an emerging issue which needs to be tackled globally. Accordingly, another important question is “What kind of green economy is beneficial and feasible for developed, emerging and developing countries?” We should also take into account the fact that natural resources are limited on the earth while at the same time the global population continues to expand. We need more time to find appropriate solutions but it is no doubt that in our pursuit of a transition to a green economy we should facilitate the transfer of technologies, capacity building and an appropriate flow of necessary funds, in both the public and private sectors.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, Japan would like to congratulate UNEP for its report entitled, “Towards a Green Economy,” which contains important insights and a deep understanding of green economies in the context of sustainable development. Japan believes that this report should be fully taken into account in further discussions under the Rio+20 processes.

Thank you Mr. Co-Chair