

Speech by H.E. Ambassador Mikio Mori
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At the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation
Of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use
the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Mr. Co-Chairs,

Japan welcomes the convening of the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. This Conference should increase the momentum of the international community toward achieving the 2030 Agenda. We would like to express our appreciation to Sweden and Fiji, which have taken the lead to realize this conference. Please allow me to take this opportunity to congratulate Fiji, the Co-Chair, becoming the first Pacific Island country to preside over the United Nations Conference on Climate Change. Japan fully supports Fiji's presidency at COP23 towards achieving steady and full implementation of the Paris Agreement. We are also grateful to the efforts made by the Co-facilitators, Portugal and Singapore, for their dedication to draft the "Call for Action," a joint declaration which is expected to be adopted at this Conference.

As an island nation surrounded by and benefiting from the ocean, Japan recognizes this Conference to be a remarkable occasion for the international community to tackle urgent issues related to the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources.

In this light, Japan co-sponsored the UN General-Assembly resolution in 2015 that called for this conference to be convened. Furthermore, Japan provided \$44,000 to the trust fund to assist the participation of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Least Developed Countries (LDCs) at this Conference.

SDGs

The implementation of the SDGs is a common task for the international community. Under the SDGs Promotion Headquarters, presided by the Prime Minister Shinzo Abe himself, Japan is taking steady steps to achieve the SDGs both domestically and internationally.

This Conference is the first UN meeting to be held on a specific goal. While all the 17 SDGs are indivisible, it is a clear proof that the conservation of the ocean, which is the main theme of SDG 14, is recognized internationally as an urgent topic requiring a serious global response.

Among many issues of concern, Japan places particular emphasis on marine debris, ocean acidification, sustainable fisheries and assistance to Small Island Developing States. I am pleased to share with you that on this occasion Japan has registered 12 voluntary commitments focusing on these areas.

Marine Debris: Target 14.1

Marine pollution and debris constitute a serious cross-boundary problem that demands a worldwide response. Since about 80% of marine debris stem from land-based sources, it is vital for each country to have in place a comprehensive strategy for waste management in order to address marine pollution effectively. In this regard, Japan has been strongly promoting the 3Rs: namely, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle, utilizing environmentally sound technologies to improve waste management. We assist developing countries in their efforts to implement the 3Rs in particular through organizing the Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific.

Japan reaffirmed its commitment to combat marine debris as the Presidency of the G7 at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit last year. We are convinced that efforts on the 3Rs as well as resource efficiency contribute greatly to the prevention and reduction of marine debris, in particular plastic, from land-based sources.

Ocean Acidification: Target 14.3

With regard to ocean acidification, promoting surveys and research is critical in our efforts to better tackle the impact of climate change on the oceans, as we still lack sufficient scientific knowledge. Japan, in partnership with various international initiatives, has focused on maritime observation as well as research and development on climate change impact forecasts. Through these initiatives, we aim at enhancing the scientific knowledge necessary to plan policies that will combat threats to the marine ecosystem. We will continue to carry out quantitative assessments of the impact of ocean acidification on plankton, and work on developing new observational technologies and sensors in this regard.

Sustainable Management of Fisheries: Target 14.4

Marine resources are not infinite and can be utilized in a sustainable manner under proper management. Japan actively engages in activities to promote international management and sustainable use of marine resources through Regional Fisheries Management Organizations (RFMOs).

Japan also attaches great importance to eliminating illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. In this regard, I am honored to announce that on May 19 Japan concluded the *Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing*. We call upon states that have not yet done so to follow suit.

SIDS

The need for capacity building of human resources in the Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries is substantial in order to achieve the SDGs. At the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States held in September 2014 in Samoa, Japan pledged to assist in training 5,000 people over three years from 2015. I am proud to introduce to you that the number is estimated to have already reached over 4,000 trainees by the end of 2016.

PALM

Furthermore, the year 2017 marks the 20th anniversary Pacific Islands Leaders' Meeting, so-called the "PALM". Since its first meeting in 1997, the PALM has been instrumental in advancing cooperation among Japan and the Pacific Island Countries on wide spectrum of issues. We expect that issues related to the oceans, seas and maritime resources will also be discussed at its 8th Meeting in May 2018.

Conclusion

It is our sincere hope that all stakeholders become actively engaged in implementing SDG 14, following the "Call for Action" to be adopted at this Conference. As part of this initiative, Japan is determined to steadily implement our voluntary commitments, thus contributing to the progress of the SDGs as a whole.

Last but not least, let us remind ourselves that the SDGs are not to be achieved by reaching respective goals per se, but that the goals are interdependent. So we need to take a "nexus"-approach, which integrates various goals across different sectors. I expect to see a fruitful discussion to take place at this Conference, so that its outcome will bring about significant progress not only for achieving SDG 14 but also for the entire SDGs package.

Thank you.