

Statement by Mr. Masaya Sagawa
Delegation of Japan
Thematic discussion: Mining
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And my thanks go also to the two panelists for their informative presentations.

Mr. Chairman,

There was a time when Japan was a major producer of gold and silver. Japan has long history of mining, and it has also experienced the serious pollution mines can cause. At present, the mining sector accounts for only 0.1 percent of Japan's GDP. Yet mining continues, and in a sustainable manner, which is to say, bearing in mind the need to promote at the same time three objectives: environmental protection, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and recycling. It is on this basis that Japan also aids developing countries in their efforts to engage in sustainable mining.

(Environmental protection)

Allow me to say a word about each of these three objectives. First, environmental protection.

Out of about 7,000 abandoned mines in Japan, it has been necessary in approximately 450 to take measures to address pollution problems. Technical support has therefore been provided to local governments and mining companies by the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC), which has developed sophisticated measures for treating mine wastewater and resolving other problems.

Drawing on its long experience with mining and sharing the advanced technologies it has created to address pollution in this area, Japan provides technical assistance to developing countries to assist them in engaging in sustainable mining. It also contributes to capacity-building in this area by organizing seminars and producing manuals in a range of languages.

(CSR)

Allow me to turn to CSR. Japanese mining companies have long engaged in CSR activities in the communities in which they are located. Currently, Japanese companies operating outside Japan are also contributing to regional development through activities extending from the creation of the transportation and electrical infrastructure necessary for mining activities, to building water supply and sewage facilities and even cultural centers. They also often provide assistance in the fields of education and medicine.

(Recycling)

Finally, Japan attaches great importance to the recycling of mineral-based materials in the sustainable development of the mining sector. Establishing a system for recycling the final products of mining makes for more effective use of energy and resources and also reduces the volume of new resources consumed. I would just add that Japan is working with other Asian countries to establish a recycling network that will promote sustainable mining in the Asian region.

In concluding, Mr. Chairman, if the international community pursues the three objectives I have mentioned, namely environmental protection, CSR and recycling, Japan believes that we will make significance progress towards global achievement of sustainable mining.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.