

Remarks by the Representative of Japanese Delegation  
Thematic Discussions on desertification, Commission on Sustainable  
Development  
7 May 2008

Mr. Chair,

First of all allow me to express my heartfelt appreciation to you for giving me the floor. I am also grateful to all the panelists for their informative presentations.

Many countries suffering from desertification are poor countries, whose economies depend on such primary industries as agriculture and pasturage. Difficulties to combat desertification are the vicious circles that increasing development pressure on lands due to poverty leads to further degradation of lands, which stimulates further land development and, eventually, facilitates desertification in both space and quality. Furthermore, there is a negative factor that those countries suffering from desertification are located in dry areas that are vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Meanwhile, market-economies have been progressing in the countries suffering from desertification, and savings obtained through economic development will be effective for water and food shortages in times of drought and famine.

For this reason, activities needed to be addressed in order to combat desertification are of importance in:

- 1) Techniques to ease up development pressure on lands through the application of appropriate agricultural practices,
- 2) Techniques to restore degraded lands through reforestation,
- 3) Measures to fight poverty as well as to improve human adaptability by means, which are independent from lands and enable income-generations, other than agricultural income, through production of soap and needle-works etc.

In this regard, the Government of Japan supports paragraph 81 of “Insecure land tenure and lack of access to markets are among the main barriers to the willingness of land users to invest in long-term sustainable land management” (E/CN.17/2008/7). Furthermore, the Government of Japan recognizes that measures to combat desertification should be implemented together with sustainable development.

Thank you.