

International Seminar
“The Age of Renewable Energy Diplomacy and Japan’s Course”
Opening Remarks by Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Mr. Adnan Amin, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA),
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to deliver a welcome remark as Foreign Minister of Japan at the opening of the International Seminar “The Age of Renewable Energy Diplomacy and Japan’s Course.” It is my great pleasure to welcome IRENA Director-General Adnan Amin in Japan in this beautiful season when cherry blossoms are in full bloom and to host a seminar on this important theme with wide public participation.

(The Age of Renewable Energy Diplomacy)

Spring is a time for renaissance and hope. Today, we are feeling the coming of spring in the field of renewable energy as well. Such a move is going in the same direction as the age of renewable energy diplomacy advocated by Director-General Adnan Amin.

This development is underscored by the particularly significant role played by renewable energy, while the international community is making serious efforts to realize a low carbon society through energy transition, in light of the Paris Agreement. In recent years, renewable power generation cost has fallen dramatically in many parts of the world, and in this regard, renewables have become fully cost-competitive against fossil fuels such as coal and gas.

In responding to the call by Director-General Adnan Amin, I attended the eighth session of the IRENA Assembly held in Abu Dhabi last January and delivered a policy speech titled “Renewable Energy Diplomacy of Japan – Climate Change and Energy Future”. In this speech, I expressed that Japan is welcoming the new era of renewable energy and would lead the world on energy transition, while addressing the climate change. Thankfully, my speech gained lots of resonance from participants including

Director-General Adnan Amin.

It is my hope that Director-General Adnan Amin will take full advantage of his visit to Japan to witness Japan's efforts on renewable energy and that this seminar will provide an opportunity to deepen discussion with many people in and out of Japan. I am very delighted that Japan's renewable energy diplomacy that I launched last January has promptly achieved such tangible results.

In my speech delivered at the IRENA Assembly, I expressed Japan's willingness to undertake renewable energy diplomacy with new ways of thinking; to grasp the global dynamics properly; and to implement coherent, long-term solutions that are aligned with global trends. This seminar will provide a valuable opportunity for us to appreciate such global dynamics through a direct communication with Director-General Adnan Amin who stays in a pivotal position in the global renewable energy landscape. I hope that Japan's renewable energy diplomacy will further advance through today's discussion.

(Renewable Energy Diplomacy and Economic Growth)

Energy is a basis for daily lives of the people and it is indispensable for Japan's economic growth and prosperity. As Japan is highly dependent on import for energy resources, it is a touchstone for Japan's foreign policy if it is able to unfold strategic energy diplomacy, or not, corresponding to an ever-changing global picture.

Following my speech at the IRENA Assembly last January, I received the recommendations on energy diplomacy in February from the Advisory Panel on Climate Change, which is formed by prominent experts from various fields. They suggested that Japan should promote a new diplomacy on energy by leading global efforts against climate change, and put more emphasis on renewable energy in its foreign policy.

The reason why I advocate renewable energy diplomacy is that renewable energy has the highest growth potential in the global energy sector. Also, I believe that the future of Japan's economic growth depends on the success,

or the failure, of transforming Japan's advanced technology in related fields into the robust competitiveness in the global market.

According to the World Energy Outlook by the International Energy Agency (IEA), renewable energy will dominate the two-thirds of global investment in additional generation capacity by 2040. As a consequence, globally, renewables are expected to account for 40 percent of the total power generation in 2040. In terms of incorporating global growth into Japan, it is obvious that renewable energy is a highly promising area and it deserves to be given a prioritized position in resource allocation.

Renewable energy diplomacy is one of the key pillars of Japan's energy diplomacy, and the particular focus is given to it in overall economic diplomacy as well, aiming at boosting Japan's economic growth. It is my sincere hope that Japan would take a leading role in global efforts against climate change through promotion and expansion of renewable energy and pave the way for a better future of energy for Japan and the world.

(Cooperation with IRENA)

IRENA is an outstandingly important partner for Japan to undertake active renewable energy diplomacy. Since its official inauguration in 2011, IRENA has facilitated deployment of renewable energy on a global scale and has become an international organization with 155 member states today.

Japan has been and will be supporting IRENA by various means to move further forward and is willing to take a leadership in global efforts toward energy transition and a fight against climate change, together with IRENA.

(Conclusion)

In Today's seminar, Director-General Adnan Amin will deliver a keynote speech and will discuss with panels on the current global issues related to renewable energy and the environment surrounding Japan. In going along energy transition and in tackling climate change, it is important for the international community to join our forces together for common global

interests.

Let me conclude my remark by expressing my sincere wish that today's seminar in this cherry blossom season will be a fruitful opportunity for us all to take a fresh look at Japan's present position in the global renewable energy picture and reflect on Japan's course in the future. Thank you for your attention.

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