

2nd International Symposium on the Law of the Sea
**“International Law for the Resources of the Sea:
Scientific Advances, Preservation of Environment,
Equity in Benefit Sharing”**

**Opening Remarks by Mr. Hitoshi Kikawada, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for
Foreign Affairs**

Good afternoon. Thank you for the introduction. My name is Hitoshi Kikawada, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs. Thank you for coming to the Second International Symposium on the Law of the Sea. I am delighted to see such a large audience. The reason for this is that there is a very high level of interest about the efforts of Japan on ensuring orderly exploitation of the marine resources and the importance of “the rule of law at sea”.

I do not need to tell you that there are rare earth and rare metals in the seas and oceans which are the key materials for high technology and low-carbon society. There are also marine genetic resources with enormous potentials of exploitation. Since Japan is a State surrounded by the seas and oceans with limited resources of the land, the development of marine resources is an agenda of critical importance. But this applies not only to Japan. The international community also pays close attention to the development of maritime resources. What is important for exploitation of the maritime resources is to establish the international rules for orderly exploitation of these resources, and to reinforce the compliance to such rules. In other words, as is often referred to by Prime Minister Abe, the promotion of “the rule of law at sea” is important. Japan has the honor to serve as the presidency of G7 meetings this year. The Foreign Ministers’ Meeting is planned to be held in Hiroshima. “The rule of law at sea” will be one of the issues to be tackled there. At this symposium, we hope that a multitude of discussions will be held from different perspectives, regarding “the rule of law at sea”.

Almost 20 years have passed since the entry into force of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). For these years we have continued our consideration on how we should realize sustainable development

and how States should coordinating their interests with each other in various ways while complying with the rules under UNCLOS. Against this background, we are now facing a series of emerging issues.

For example, we see the advancement in technology to develop the resources of the deep seabed. This may include rare earth, rare metal and methane hydrate. The more potential we see, the more inevitable the occurrence of conflicts and tensions over these resources. In the case of Asia, in the South China Sea and the East China Sea, we are witnessing numerous problems.

This symposium focuses on the topics of the mineral resources of the Area (international deep sea-bed zone), resources of the continental shelf and marine biodiversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction. I look forward to vibrant discussions on these topics. In the growing recognition of the necessity of conserving the biodiversity and the importance of the genetic resources in the high seas and the Area, a UN preparatory committee on a new international instrument on the subject is slated to start from this year. I hope that the findings from today's events would earn you a new perspective to look into the matter, and would be taken back to your respective States and organizations to be reflected in the preparatory process.

Let me conclude my brief remarks by wishing all the best for the success of this symposium and my special gratitude goes to all the people who have traveled all the way here, all experts and Panelists from abroad. Once again, I wish for active and fruitful discussions, and thank you very much for your participation.