

Country Statement by H.E. Mr. Kenta WAKABAYASHI

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

and the Head of the Delegation of Japan

at the 69th Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission

for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)

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Your Excellency Mr. Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão, Prime Minister of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste,

Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of ESCAP,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, the international community is at a critical stage. We have less than one thousand days before the target date of the Millennium Development Goals; and discussions on the post-2015 development agenda are in progress. The year 2015 will also mark the end of the HFA, Hyogo Framework for Action, an international guideline for disaster risk reduction or DRR.

Building upon this background, this ESCAP session, which focuses on resilience to disasters and economic crisis, is very meaningful. I would like to take this opportunity to commend the leadership of Dr. Heyzer for promoting effective cooperation as the chair of regional coordination mechanism.

Disaster risk reduction or DRR is critical for this region which experiences frequent natural disasters and rapid urbanization. DRR is the field where the Asia Pacific region can lead the world. 90% of natural disaster victims live in developing countries. 85% of water-related disaster victims are in Asia. Disasters can wipe out long term development efforts in an instant. That is why we should demonstrate our leadership in mainstreaming DRR.

Japan has a long history of coping with and overcoming natural disasters, as we experienced the Great East Japan Earthquake. We are steadily making progress with reconstruction to be more resilient to disasters.

Bearing in mind warm support from international community at the terrible disaster, I feel it is Japan's responsibility to share our experiences and lessons learned with the world. For this, Japan hosted the "World Ministerial Conference on Disaster Reduction in Tohoku" last July. Furthermore, we will host the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in early 2015 to contribute to formulating an effective post-HFA. I would like to invite strong support of all member states and stakeholders for this conference.

Mr. Chairperson,

Disaster risk reduction or DRR saves human lives. It also calls for reaching out to the most vulnerable. It is natural for Japan, as an ardent promoter of Human Security, to emphasize DRR. Human Security focuses on individuals, and aims at realizing a rich and sustainable society through the protection and

empowerment of people.

It is vital to incorporate DRR in a new international development framework beyond 2015. This will raise general awareness on DRR and mobilize necessary resources. I welcome that ESCAP is preparing a report on the post-2015 development agenda together with UNDP and ADB so that our regional voice is heard in the United Nations. I sincerely hope that the report will emphasize the need to establish an effective development agenda based on Human Security and to mainstream DRR. Japan will spare no effort to ensure the success of the report.

Mr. Chairperson,

Cooperation with and within ESCAP has vast potential. Cooperation in the area of space technology is one good example. Remote sensing space technology was especially useful for analyzing the situation in affected areas after the Great East Japan Earthquake. With a view to utilizing Japan's expertise and experience, Japan has submitted to this ESCAP session a resolution on the application of space technology for DRR for the next five years. We hope that it will be adopted with the wide support of member states.

Measures for persons with disabilities are another important area of our cooperation with ESCAP. Reportedly, in the Great East Japan Earthquake the mortality rate of persons with disabilities was twice as high as that of the average.

The Incheon Strategy adopted last November includes perspectives of DRR, and Japan will contribute to its implementation.

Mr. Chairperson,

ESCAP is Japan's longest-standing partner in addressing regional and international challenges. I believe that stronger regional cooperation is particularly essential for the Asia-Pacific region considering its rich diversity and dynamism.

Next year, Japan will celebrate the 60th anniversary of its ESCAP membership. Japan is determined to make stronger ties with ESCAP to realize even closer regional cooperation.

Thank you very much.