

Statement by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the Diplomatic Conference on the Minamata Convention
October 10, 2013

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

After some ten years of effort in the international community in striving to achieve the sound management of mercury, today, here in Kumamoto, the Minamata Convention on Mercury has been adopted and opened for signature. Japan has been making every effort to share the lessons learned from the Minamata Disease, so we feel honored to host a diplomatic conference for a convention with a Japanese name, Minamata, in its title. Once again, I extend my heartfelt welcome to you all.

I would like to extend my appreciation to Mr. Steiner and his UNEP team for their hard work in facilitating the process for drafting this Convention. Equally, we could have not concluded the difficult negotiations without the leadership of Mr. Fernando Lugris, Chair of INC, as well as the strong will and persistence of all governments and institutions that took part. I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere respect to everyone who has contributed to the birth of this Convention.

The Minamata Convention on Mercury is the first legally binding instrument which comprehensively manages a single material existing in nature. This convention will alert the world to the severity of mercury pollution. It will express the strong commitment of governments and institutions never to repeat the tragedy caused by mercury.

As Prime Minister Abe announced yesterday, Japan will provide \$2 billion in total over the next three years to assist developing countries in tackling environmental pollution.

More concretely, Japan will deliver ODA in the following three areas: measures to tackle air pollution, such as the construction of highly efficient coal-fired power plants, which will reduce the emission of pollutants, including mercury; means to fight water pollution, such as the construction and repair of sewage systems; and waste management projects, such as the construction of recycling and waste management systems, which will promote a material-recycling society with low adverse effects for the environment.

In addition to this, we will launch a capacity building program specifically designed for the prevention of mercury pollution. This program will also assist developing countries in concluding the Minamata Convention.

These will be based on our experience, with careful consideration given to the unique situation of each country. Our world-leading environmental technologies, which we have developed during the process of overcoming pollution, will be fully utilized.

While the adoption of this Convention bears great importance, it is only the first step. It is my sincere hope that this Convention will enter into force as soon as possible, and that all suffering from mercury is removed. Let us all unite in making sure that this Convention is steadily implemented, and in realizing a world without mercury pollution.

Thank you.