

**Statement by Seiji Kihara, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for  
Foreign Affairs of Japan, on the occasion of the London  
Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade**

Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my deepest appreciation to the Government of the United Kingdom for its action in holding this London Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade. I am honoured to participate in this very important conference with such a distinguished array of delegates, including heads of states, from all over the world.

Recently, the illegal trade in wildlife has reached an unprecedented scale. Such activities are not only threatening nature conservation but also have severe security implications in the light of the possible connections with transnational criminal networks.

We have gathered here to reaffirm the urgency of this threat and to share ideas on countermeasures that we can implement together.

There are many issues to be dealt with, such as improving the law enforcement system and facilitating information-sharing among the relevant states. Japan has always actively participated in international frameworks such as CITES, and has assisted developing countries through various activities, such as MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants) and the preparation in the countries concerned of the relevant national legislation.

In addition, against the backdrop of increased emphasis on the importance of stiffening penalties in order to control illegal trade, Japan has amended its domestic law (the Law for the Conservation of Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora), and has strengthened the penalties for illegal imports and exports and for domestic trade in endangered species.

From the viewpoint of establishing a global basis for addressing illegal wildlife

trade, it is also important to tackle the overall issue of transnational organized crime in a broader context. Japan, as a member of G8 and G20, has adopted various measures against transnational organized crime, for example through its contributions to the UN organizations which work on crime prevention.

We are determined to continue these efforts and to work more closely with the governments represented here.

Today's conference is turning the spotlight on the illegal trade in wildlife and issuing anew a global warning about this problem. Japan will keep focusing on this issue so as to maintain the momentum gained at this meeting and to help ensure that the international community acts as one in dealing with this challenge.

Thank you very much.