

**Statement by Masahiro Onishi, Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Botswana,
on the occasion of the Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Botswana for hosting this Kasane Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade. I am honoured to participate in this important conference with such a distinguished array of delegates, including heads of states and Ministers, 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.

Under these circumstances, the International Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade hosted by the United Kingdom was held for the first time last year. Japan, together with many countries and international organizations, joined the political commitment of London Declaration with aims such as “Eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products” and “Strengthening law enforcement”.

Mr. Chairman,

Issues of poaching and illegal trade cannot be settled by individual nations efforts, they have to be tackled by international cooperation. From such a standpoint, Japan has always been participating actively in international frameworks such as CITES, and has supported MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants), and has assisted developing countries with the preparation of relevant national legislation.

Japan has also taken various measures against transnational organized crime. For example, Japan has contributed to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime by

providing capacity building assistance to law enforcement authorities of developing countries.

With regard to the Global Environment Facility Sixth Replenishment period which became effective on July last year, Japan pledged the largest contribution among donor countries. I hope for a desirable outcome to be brought about, since these projects under the Global Environment Facility include the efforts aimed at addressing issues of poaching and illegal wildlife trade of elephants, rhinoceros, and tigers in Asia and Africa with the resource of 80 million US dollars.

Furthermore, 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 illegal domestic trade in designated endangered species.

In addition, awareness raising activities are also important. Taking the opportunity of the World Wildlife Day on March 3, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry and the Ministry of the Environment of Japan, together with an NGO, TRAFFIC EAST ASIA JAPAN and e-commerce companies, held the panel exhibition and symposium on trade in endangered species, particularly, trade on the Internet, which has been growing rapidly.

Mr. Chairman,

I expect today's conference will show the people throughout the world that the illegal wildlife trade is a problem of great importance for the international society. I sincerely hope, today's meaningful meeting will create momentum in addressing this issue.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express our determination to deal with this challenge continuously in coordination with international society.

Thank you very much.