

Draft Speech at the Ministerial Session, the 26th Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference, by the Representative of the Japanese Delegation

Mr. Chair,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Japan and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, H. E. Mr. Fumio Kishida, who will be the Chairperson of the Energy Charter Conference in 2016, I would like to start with presenting our compliments to the Government of Georgia for the opening of the 26th Meeting of the Energy Charter Conference in Tbilisi. I would also like to express our deepest gratitude for its warmest hospitality. Our appreciation is also extended to the Energy Charter Secretariat as well as those who have prepared such a well-organized Conference.

Mr. Chair,

It is said that the first contact of humanity with energy was dated back to about 500 thousand years ago, when our ancestors utilized the fire for the first time. As time passed by, energy usage has been rapidly expanded by technological progress especially since the Industrial Revolution, and our society have been achieving the dramatic increase in productivity. The expanded utilization of energy and technological innovation has enabled us to enjoy improvement of our living standards and economic prosperity. On the other hand, we today face challenges such as lack of energy access due to geological isolation and economic disparity and climate change resulted from the increase of greenhouse gas emissions. It is imperative that we address these global challenges with our wisdom and solidarity.

In this regard, it is a great achievement that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted at the UN Summit in September this year, sets forth Goal 7, which is to “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all”, as one of the common goals for the international community. We also should pay careful attention to the outcomes and discussion of COP 21 now being held in Paris, which aims to adopt an agreed international framework on climate change after 2020. Energy is the very foundation on which the human society has been developing. Therefore, I strongly believe that it is our duty to utilize energy in an effective and sustainable manner so that we

can pass the benefits of energy to our future generations.

Mr. Chair,

I believe that the Energy Charter Treaty should play an important role in offering solutions to the global challenges pertinent to energy. The Energy Charter Treaty came into effect against the backdrop of exploring a new form of energy cooperation after the end of the Cold War. Since the advent of the 21st century, the economic growth in emerging and developing countries has been driving energy demand to a steady increase. Under such circumstances, the partnership with the private sector became more important in order to secure stable and continuing investment in the energy sector. Accordingly, the roles of the Energy Charter Treaty have become more relevant in providing a stable legal basis for investment activities of the private sector as well as liberalizing trade and transit in the energy sector. In this sense, the theme of this Conference, “Fostering regional cooperation through cross border energy trade”, sounds very timely.

The Ministerial Conference on the International Energy Charter was held in The Hague in May this year with the participation of 75 countries and the related organizations, with 64 parities including Japan signing the International Energy Charter. This historical fact clearly proves that the Energy Charter process will remain instrumental in strengthening global energy security and promoting energy cooperation. As a result, attention to the Energy Charter process is increasing among Asian and African countries, where energy demand is expected to increase along with economic and population growth. Engagement of these countries into the Energy Charter process is required in urgency in terms of improving global energy access.

Mr. Chair,

Japan, as the Conference Chair in 2016, will take a lead to discuss these main energy-related challenges facing the international community. Japan would particularly like to engage in discussions to address major issues of global concern, namely, enhancement of energy security, improvement of energy access and measures against climate change including through the promotion of clean energy. Japan is the G7 Chair next year as well, and will enhance cooperation through the international frameworks, such as the G7 and the G20, and work

closely with major relevant international organizations.

As seen in the recent geopolitical challenges such as the situation in Ukraine and the wild ups and downs in oil prices, the global energy landscape is changing with greater fluidity. We are now required to further strengthen our solidarity and cooperation in addressing our common challenge, which is to simultaneously accomplish securing energy resources, implementing measures against climate change and achieving economic development. I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing our determination as the Conference Chair in 2016 to push forward the modernization of the Energy Charter process and to contribute to strengthening and developing the Energy Charter process, in the course towards the next Conference in 2016.

Thank you for your attention.

(822 words)