Statement by Mr. Masakazu HAMACHI,

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,

at the 72nd Session of the United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

May 18, 2016

Chairperson,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

(Introduction)

Let me first congratulate the convening of this 72nd session of the UNESCAP.

On behalf of the people of Japan, let me also express my sincere gratitude for the heartfelt message of encouragement and emergency relief goods from your country, in response to the tragic loss of lives and devastation caused by the earthquakes in Kumamoto.

(Importance of STI in the policy of Japan)

The theme of this session is “science, technology and innovation for sustainable development.” Japan appreciates this is timely and appropriate theme. The Sustainable Development Goals were adopted at the United Nations last year, and the international momentum toward development policy was strengthened.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe strongly pointed out at COP21 that the key to acting against climate change without sacrificing economic growth is the development of innovative technologies. Science, technology and innovation (STI) are indispensable elements for tackling global challenges such as sustainable economic growth, industrial development, poverty reduction through expanding employment opportunities, the fight against climate change, securement of natural resources, energy and food, and improvement of universal health coverage.

In this context, the G7 Science and Technology Ministers’ Meeting in Tsukuba, Ibaraki was held in May this year in Japan.

This G7 ministers' meeting was advocated initially by the Japanese government in 2008. This year, G7 ministers discussed "inclusive innovations" that create socially inclusive and sustainable innovation, global health, innovative energy technology development and empowerment of women.

(Promotion of STI through the development assistance)

The Government of Japan regards STI as an important pillar in its international cooperation policy. The Japanese Cabinet decided "the fifth master plan of science and technology" this last January, and expressed its strong intention to actively contribute to the solutions of global challenges, improvement of the quality of life in developing countries and the sustainable development of the entire world by utilizing its STI.

(Support of education and human resource development by exploiting STI)

Education and human resources development is essential

to create new STI. Japan has promoted and assisted the development of human resources with scientific knowledge and expertise in Asia and the Pacific.

For example, Japan supports activities in the Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology (MJIIT) with the objective of incorporating a novel Japanese-style of education in Malaysia, by procuring equipment for research, designing the education curriculum and dispatching Japanese teachers. Presently, academic programs at MJIIT are strongly supported by a consortium of twenty-six Japanese universities.

Japan also assists the development of human resources in the area of remote sensing by using data from satellites at the Asian Institute of Technology in Thailand. This capacity building assistance strengthens “ASEAN-Japan Disaster Management Cooperation.”

Meanwhile, cooperation in vocational skill training also has a vital importance in the development of the countries, since it is directly related to job opportunities, so, Japan is engaged in the

South-South cooperation in Fiji, to support such countries as Tuvalu and Kiribati. I myself visited the site of the vocational training in Fiji and this first-hand experience gave me a deeper understanding of the importance of interaction among Pacific island countries and international cooperation in the field of education and human resource development.

(Response to global issues by exploiting STI)

Japan also has good practices in which the Japanese private sector transfers its own technology to other countries that face global challenges.

Seeing that Tonga is frequently affected by cyclones, it needs technology which prevents the collapse of wind power generator blades. In this context, Japan introduced to relevant Tonga parties an aerogenerator system, whose wind turbines can be tilted down in the case of a typhoon or a cyclone, in cooperation with the Japanese private sector. The Minister of Public Enterprise of Tonga expressed interest in this technology

when he visited the site in Okinawa.

Japan also contributes to the fight against climate change through the development of new and prolific varieties of rice which resist high heat, drought or flood.

(Attention to gender)

Gender perspective is also important in using STI.

While there has been rapid population growth and urbanization in recent years in India, Japan has supported the development of infrastructure of the Delhi Metro. In this project, the “Women-only coach” that has a huge following among women in Japan has been introduced in order to offer safe and comfortable public transportation for women.

Japan wishes to continue to take the initiative in social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific by using its latest STI.

(Taking advantage of traditional knowledge and STI)

While STI remains important to address global challenges, traditional knowledge could also be useful. In disaster prevention, a tsunami early-warning system with advanced STI is used to detect tsunamis in advance and issue warnings. However, once earthquakes occur and tsunamis arrive, the most urgent and crucial thing is the immediate evacuation of residents to upland. In this point of view, there is a case in which we can prevent or minimize loss of life and damage by following traditional knowledge that we must immediately evacuate when the speed of backrush in the sea is very high, because the tsunami must be huge.

The Resolution on “World Tsunami Awareness Day” was adopted in the General Assembly of the United Nations last December with strong support of ESCAP members. Japan will enhance policies to raise awareness on tsunamis and take necessary measures against tsunami disasters, using STI and traditional knowledge.

In this context, Japan will organize a side-event related to

“World Tsunami Awareness Day” on May 18. We will have a panel discussion about the usefulness of STI in the measures against tsunamis and introduction of tangible STI. I hope that many representatives of your country will participate in this event.

Thank you for your kind attention.