

Remarks by State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan
WASHIO Eiichiro at the 11st session of IRENA Assembly

President of the Assembly, Director-General Francesco La Camera, Ladies and Gentlemen, my name is Washio Eiichiro, State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. While the spread of the COVID-19 threatens the world, renewable energy is the only source of energy whose supply is growing. Once again, I would like to express my gratitude for IRENA's unwavering contributions under the strong leadership of Director-General La Camera.

Carbon neutrality is a global goal for humanity to achieve. However, the challenges to its realization vary from country to country, and there is no single path to its realization. In October of last year, Japan declared its intention to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050; that is, net-zero greenhouse gas emissions.

Countries with limited energy resources like Japan, for example, need to mobilize technology and innovation in order to achieve carbon neutrality, while maximizing the introduction of renewable energy sources.

As part of this effort, Japan set targets to achieve in 14 prioritized technology areas, such as offshore wind power,

hydrogen, storage batteries, and carbon recycling at the end of last year. A fund of approximately 20 billion US dollars will be set up to provide support for these ambitious research and development projects continuously for ten years. In addition, we will create model cases of existing decarbonization technologies, including renewable energy, at various locations of Japan, without waiting for the results of technological innovation. The aim will be to generate a series of regional "decarbonization dominoes". We will concentrate on these efforts over the next five years until 2025.

Support for decarbonization in developing countries is also important. In Jordan, for example, Japan International Cooperation Agency, or JICA, is currently implementing a project for operation, maintenance and inspection to promote grid integration of renewable energy and a stable supply of electricity.

In order to accomplish widespread introduction of renewable energies on a global scale, we have to face not only its benefits but also its potential challenges. For example, I would like to point out the following three points.

Firstly, we need to have a realistic debate on ensuring adjusting power and assessing the cost of the entire power system in accordance with the individual circumstances of each country.

Secondly, as pointed out in the IRENA report, a range of minerals and metals are used for storage batteries and motors, which are indispensable for the introduction and diffusion of renewable energy. How to secure these limited resources is an issue that we must consider together.

Thirdly, we need to tackle how to deal with the mass disposal of storage batteries and solar panels. Japan raised this issue at the General Assembly of IRENA last year. Japan has already started to provide support for companies for the introduction of these recycling facilities and technical development, and JICA has also begun to provide technical training programs for developing countries.

IRENA is the most appropriate international organization to discuss these challenges. Through IRENA, I am confident that we will be able to tackle and resolve these challenges step by step in a coordinated and effective manner. Thank you very much for your attention.

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