

Remarks by State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan
ODAWARA Kiyoshi at the 12th Session of IRENA
Assembly / Stakeholder Engagement Day
(Public-Private Dialogue Renewable Energy and Circular Economy)

Thank you very much for the opportunity to make these remarks. I also appreciate the chance to have this dialogue between the public and private sectors on such an important topic.

At previous assemblies, Japan has been raising the importance of addressing the mass disposal of renewable energy equipment that is expected to reach its end of lifecycle around 2030. In order to promote the use of renewable energy in a sustainable manner, it is crucial not only to accelerate its introduction but also to consider beforehand the issue of its eventual disposal.

The stable supply of critical mineral resources, vital to promoting renewable energy, has also become an increasingly important issue. I believe the public and private sectors should address end-of-life product recycling and the reuse of renewable energy equipment.

It is important to establish transparent rules under the strong leadership of each government, as well as the efforts of the private sector, in order to ensure the “circular economy,” which is the central theme of this Public-Private Dialogue, goes beyond being just a concept. It is also necessary to steadily implement the circular economy in line with the climate change goals of each country as one united international community. I believe that this is an opportune

time for the public and private sectors of the member countries to share their knowledge and discuss how the global society can take action.

I have been actively involved in creating policies related to the field of renewable energy as a member of the Parliamentarians' Association for the Promotion and Expansion of Renewable Energies of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), the ruling party of Japan.

In order to realize the 4Rs of renewable energy equipment— that is, Reduce, Repair, Reuse, and Recycle—while minimizing costs, it is important to firstly, “disclose data with high transparency,” secondly, “evaluate the protection of the environment and of workers' rights over the life cycle of the equipment,” and thirdly, “create a clear set of rules for promoting the 4Rs.”

Japan is currently establishing an information platform designed to achieve efficient collection and reuse of resources from used solar panels. This platform brings together data on equipment performance and amounts of different mineral resources used in panels.

In addition, to increase the reliability of recycled products, it is also important to evaluate environmental aspects in the recycling process of renewable energy equipment and the status of human rights protection for workers. We believe it necessary to initiate discussions to accomplish a transparent and unified evaluation method for these kinds of value standards, which will become

increasingly important in the years to come.

Additionally, it is important to develop guidelines for ensuring safety and reliability in 4R promotion. Japan has started to develop and implement guidelines for promoting reuse and will gladly share the knowledge it has built up in this area. This includes criteria for the reuse of solar cell modules and procedures for managing information when exporting such modules overseas.

The realization of a sustainable circular economy represents a significant opportunity for recovering economic growth and employment in the post-COVID world. It is vital to create an environment that will enable investors to invest with a high degree of confidence. On this point, I believe that IRENA is an appropriate forum to discuss the development of standardized rules and guidelines while taking into consideration the circumstances of each individual country.

Japan will actively contribute to the discussion on rule-making in this field together with IRENA, drawing on its own experiences while also utilizing technology and innovation to promote the 4Rs.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

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