

Remarks by State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan ODAWARA Kiyoshi at the 23st Meeting of the Council

Excellencies,
Director-General Mr La Camera,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The surge in energy prices in the wake of the Ukraine crisis has once again reminded us of the importance of balancing energy security and energy transitions.

IRENA's flagship report, the World Energy Transitions Outlook, tells us that efficiently distributed and renewable-based energy systems can help combat climate change as well as improve energy security. However, there is no single pathway for society to make clean energy transitions. From the perspective of achieving realistic energy transitions, Japan believes that we should further discuss how those transitions should be tailored to each country's circumstances. IRENA, which boasts the largest number of members of any international energy organization, is the best place for this discussion.

As we look ahead to the future of energy, it is necessary to discuss not only the energy transition in each country, but also the future of key resources for achieving decarbonization. Here, I am referring to the future of critical mineral resources

essential for manufacturing renewable energy equipment such as solar panels and storage batteries. I am also referring to the future we envisage for hydrogen — the trump card for decarbonization. IRENA also plays to its strengths in the discussion on securing a stable supply of these resources and innovation in this area.

Securing a stable supply of critical mineral resources is a new theme for the Collaborative Frameworks. In this connection, I understand that the IRENA Secretariat will soon be providing members with guidelines to facilitate discussions and knowledge exchange on investment expansion, fairness and transparency in the market, protection of the human rights of mine workers, and environmental considerations. These are all highly important areas for consideration when thinking about how to achieve stable supplies of these essential resources.

IRENA has also been conducting in-depth analysis of the international hydrogen trade. Among the topics covered, some that hold great promise for future development include reducing costs, establishing transportation methods, and the importance of innovation toward expanding scale, as well as the ideal shape of international trade in 2030 and 2050. These are promising areas not only for Japan, which needs to introduce hydrogen on a large scale, but also for other member countries.

The energy situation has been changing dramatically since last year. IRENA has been playing a significant role in this evolving energy landscape by providing its member countries with concrete roadmaps for energy transitions. As the previous Council Chair, Japan has been supporting IRENA's activities. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Director-General Mr La Camera, to Zimbabwe for supporting Japan as the previous Vice Council Chair, and to all of you who have supported IRENA and its work.

Thank you for your attention.