

Tokyo Sustainable Seafood Summit 2022
Message by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
Mr. TAKAGI Kei

I'm TAKAGI Kei, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. Thank you for the opportunity to deliver this keynote speech.

I am a politician who has long been based in Tokyo, the largest consumption area of fisheries products in Japan and also one of the largest consumption areas in the world. While being particularly concerned than others about the changing circumstances surrounding the oceans and fisheries, I have been close to the voices of those who are involved in the fisheries industry and have seriously considered what its ideal future should be.

I also enjoy sea fishing, and have taken part in activities to investigate the quality of sea water and soil of Tokyo Bay through the ecology of the fish we caught, and have also engaged in conservation activities concerning the marine environment.

Today, I would like to talk about Japan's efforts to realize sustainable fisheries and oceans, taking my own experiences into account.

Achieving sustainable fisheries and oceans is one of the key diplomatic issues discussed in various international fora such as the UN Ocean Conference, the G7, the G20, and APEC.

From the viewpoint of sustainable supply of marine resources, we believe that the international community needs to unite in addressing two challenges. One is preventing, controlling, and ending IUU fishing, while the other is conserving the environment of the oceans.

I would like to start by expounding on the Japan's global efforts to address IUU fishing.

IUU fishing refers to fishing activities that violates national and international laws such as illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. For example, poaching, under-reporting, fishing by vessels without nationality and fishing by unauthorized vessels in waters covered by regional fisheries management organizations.

Currently, Japan has seen poor catches of Japanese common squid due to illegal operations by foreign fishing vessels in the waters surrounding Yamato ridge of the Sea of Japan. In addition, it has been pointed out that poaching and illegal operations by foreign fishing vessels have become a serious problem in many parts of the world, also affecting the local economy and the sound development of the fisheries industry.

IUU fishing is a threat to the sustainable use of marine resources, and its elimination is targeted in SDG 14. It is estimated that nearly 30% of the world's fish catch originates from IUU fishing.

IUU fishing is a multifaceted issue that involves not only the sustainable use of marine resources, but also maritime security, forced labor, violation of human rights, and transnational organized crime.

Under these circumstances, Japan, as a responsible fishing state, is doing its best to end IUU fishing.

Director-General KOYA of the Fisheries Agency will discuss Japan's domestic efforts later, so I would like to talk about the global dimension. Japan is providing bilateral support in addition to multilateral cooperation including that with regional fisheries management organizations, international organizations such as the FAO, and international fora like the G20 and APEC.

For example, when it comes to multilateral cooperation, in regional fisheries management organizations, Japan is leading discussions on science-based resource management and playing an active role in rule-making and the listing of IUU fishing vessels.

Japan has also been advocating and leading discussions on the importance of addressing IUU fishing at various international fora, including the 2019 G20 Osaka Summit. Furthermore, as a state that places importance on the rule of law, Japan has signed up to the "Agreement on Port State Measures" and is encouraging non-contracting parties to do so as well in order to enhance the effectiveness of this agreement.

Bilateral assistance, both in terms of hardware and software, is being provided seamlessly, including through the ODA.

For example, on the hardware side, we have provided monitoring vessels and relevant equipment to countries in Africa, Southeast Asia, and Oceania to help them combat IUU fishing. On the software side, we are working to improve the monitoring and enforcement capabilities of developing countries by providing capacity-building support and training.

We will continue to work with the international community to strengthen the system to deter IUU fishing.

In order to realize sustainable fisheries and oceans, it is necessary to work on conservation of the marine environment as well.

In recent years, plastic litter has become a problem, as it remains in the marine environment for long periods without decomposing, resulting in damage to the ecosystem. It is estimated that the weight of plastic in the oceans will exceed that of all fish by 2050. Hence, it is necessary to take transboundary measures.

Japan proposed the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision" at the G20 Osaka Summit in 2019, which aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, and this vision has been widely shared by 87 countries and regions.

In order to realize this vision, Japan has launched the "MARINE Initiative" to conduct capacity building and build infrastructure based on the needs of developing countries, and has trained more than 17,000 personnel for waste management worldwide.

In Japan, the Plastic Resource Circulation Act was enacted in April this year, promoting resource recycling efforts by various entities from product design to waste disposal. We will continue to actively pursue such measures in Japan and overseas, and aim to take the lead in implementing the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision".

In addition, as calls for the establishment of international rules on the plastic waste issue grow stronger worldwide, Japan proposed, at the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) in March this year, that it is necessary to establish a framework for global measures which engages as many countries with high consumption and emission of plastics as possible. Japan also suggested that such efforts be made in accordance with the

circumstances of each country.

To set a common goal on global scale, Japan also proposed a national action plan and a mechanism to encourage further actions. This proposal was supported by a number of countries.

At the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA), the resolution "End plastic pollution," which reflects Japan's proposal, was unanimously adopted. Negotiations to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution are scheduled to begin, and Japan is determined to lead the negotiations with the ambition of completing this work by the end of 2024.

Furthermore, Japan is working to achieve the "30 by 30" target, which aims to conserve at least 30% of land and sea areas by 2030, in order to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, including marine biodiversity, by 2030.

We must create a virtuous cycle with regard to economic activity through the promotion of conservation work to achieve the "30by30" target. In particular, there is the needs for synergy with local sustainable production and consumption through the involvement of local communities and businesses.

In this regard, to take steps towards the "30by30" target with the engagement of all stakeholders in Japan, the "30by30 Alliance" was established. As a voluntary coalition consisting of private companies, local governments and other entities, this alliance enjoys participation of more than 250 organizations.

In this Alliance, we are expecting to see diverse initiatives that will also contribute to decarbonization and a virtuous cycle between the protection and sustainable use of nature, such as the conservation and management of secondary nature and blue carbon ecosystems, including "Satochi-Satoyama", in seaweed beds and mudflats. In this way, the public and private sectors will continue to work together to achieve the target.

Marine resources and the oceans are the foundation of our Japan's way of life and food culture. We have a responsibility to carefully protect them and hand them down to future generations. In this process, it is also important to use marine resources carefully and without waste, as the Japanese word

"Mottainai" indicates. For example, the utilization of unused fish species is a theme to be addressed in the future.

From a business perspective, a sustainable fishing industry must be profitable at all stages of the value chain, from production, processing and distribution, to sales, export, and consumption.

IUU fishery countermeasures and conservation of the marine environment are two wheels of a cart that must turn together in order to achieve sustainable fisheries - the development of fisheries industry that benefits all stakeholder.

Japan, in cooperation with the international community, will continue to demonstrate its leadership in resolving these issues. Thank you.