

Keynote Speech by H.E. Ms. KAMIKAWA Yoko,  
Foreign Minister of Japan  
at the ID3 Follow-up Session, Cairo Water Week 2023  
Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt November 1st, 2023

Distinguished participants,

My name is KAMIKAWA Yoko, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. I am honoured to have the opportunity to deliver my keynote address today, through this video message. First of all, I would like to thank His Excellency Dr. Hani Sewilam, Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation of the Arab Republic of Egypt, for his warm invitation and to congratulate him on the successful organisation of Cairo Water Week.

Cairo Water Week is an important occasion to follow up on the UN 2023 Water Conference held in March, which I co-chaired with my dear colleague Minister Sewilam. I would like to take this precious opportunity to reiterate that the world's water is in crisis and that we need to act now.

Water is the most fundamental and indispensable asset shared by all life on this planet. Yet, that water resource is now in danger. And steps towards international water-related goals and targets are alarmingly off track.

Humanity is at risk of crossing planetary boundaries in many areas, such as climate change and biodiversity, in addition to water. These fields are all interconnected. The negative impacts of climate change are being felt in every corner of the earth in the form of floods, droughts, and degradation of the aquatic environment.

We must reverse this trend. Dr. Sewilam and I led an intensive discussion at the Interactive Dialogue 3 of the UN Water Conference to address these challenges. I would like to highlight three key elements of this discussion.

First, we need scientific data and an open and integrated global platform for data collection and assessment to enable effective countermeasures, such as early warning systems.

Second, multi-benefit solutions that address both climate change mitigation and adaptation are important for more efficient investment. Institutional support will also be necessary.

Finally, we should foster the capacity of human resources, especially for the next generation of workers. In addition, we need facilitators who can connect data and assessments with decision-makers, stakeholders, and ordinary people. An end-to-end approach bridging data and practices is also needed.

Many tangible solutions, possible actions and commitments, including Egypt's AWARe, were proposed at the UN Water Conference in connection with these aspects. They are core parts of the UN Water Action Agenda, and it is crucial to implement these initiatives.

In cooperation with various countries and international organisations, Japan will act to achieve these through water transformation actions, such as the Kumamoto Initiative for Water.

This Initiative focuses on actions that simultaneously address both climate change mitigation and adaptation. For example, water facilities that are operated using highly accurate hydro-climatological forecasts will enable efficient water use and thus produce much more energy with minimal greenhouse gas emissions.

Japan will also promote research and development and capacity building in the use of satellite data, as well as Quality Infrastructure Investment to address water-related challenges.

Priority will be given to LDCs and Small Island Developing States, and to vulnerable groups, such as women and children, youth and the elderly, persons with disabilities, and indigenous peoples.

Ladies and gentlemen, if we do not act now, the next generation will face irreversible environmental catastrophes.

The path to save the planet is like the one we have followed to save small communities. We must anticipate tipping points, combine ways and means to prevent or avoid them, and implement integrated measures step by step.

Let us unite to follow this path. I believe that Egypt, in particular, understands the importance of water resource management, having built an ancient civilisation that is a global heritage thanks to the blessings of the Nile. I look forward to Egypt's continued leadership.

Let us work together to ensure that no one is left behind, and that we achieve all our goals and targets for water towards the future we want.

Thank you.