

Statement by Mr. HOSAKA Yasushi

Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

at the General Debate of the Fourth International Conference on SIDS

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

My name is HOSAKA Yasushi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan. Thank you very much for the opportunity to address this important conference.

Please allow me to express my gratitude to the United Nations, the government of Antigua and Barbuda, and all those involved for their efforts to bring this conference to St John's.

Before I begin, let me convey my heartfelt sympathy to the Government and people of Papua New Guinea affected by the recent landslide.

Japan stands with Papua New Guinea, our close friend, and ready to provide as much support and cooperation as needed.

I would like to make three points regarding the approach and efforts of Japan, a long-time partner of SIDS.

First, let me outline Japan's cooperation policy towards SIDS.

Today, it is becoming increasingly important to ensure human security, that is, to realize a society in which all people are free from fear and want and can live with dignity.

Japan itself is an island nation with many remote islands – about 14,000 – and is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes, tsunamis, and typhoons.

Against this background, Japan has been cooperating with SIDS in a number of ways, based on the needs of SIDS, while taking advantage of its own experience and technology.

According to its Development Cooperation Charter, Japan will continue to provide the necessary cooperation to SIDS regardless of their income levels, taking into consideration the actual development needs of each country, their ability to bear the associated obligations, and the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS.

Second, I would like to outline some specific examples of Japan's cooperation.

In addressing climate change, Japan is steadily implementing its commitment to provide up to a total of 70 billion US dollars both in public and private funds, over five years to 2025, and has pledged to make a new contribution of up to 165 billion Japanese yen for the second replenishment of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

In addition, Japan has already disbursed the pledged amount of 10 million US dollars to have the fund start operating in responding to loss and damage, which is to assist developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

With regard to the impact of rising sea levels due to climate change, Japan's position is that the existing baseline established by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) will be maintained.

Regarding disaster risk reduction, Japan has offered assistance through such means as human resource development and the strengthening of disaster-information-sharing-systems to reduce the relevant risks in line with the Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction.

For the oceans, we are promoting multidimensional cooperation to realize a free and open maritime order and to protect and utilize the richness of the oceans through the provision of maritime security equipment, the enhancement of fishery resource management capacity, the provision of fishery-related facilities and equipment, assistance in combating IUU fishing, support for the removal of Sargassum seaweed, that hinders the marine industry and tourism in the Caribbean region, and measures against plastic pollution.

Japan has actively engaged in international discussions on the oceans, including through Prime Minister Kishida's membership of the High Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy.

As a maritime nation, Japan attaches great importance to saving the world's beautiful oceans. In this regard, let me mention the discharge of ALPS treated water from TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station into the sea.

This is essential for promoting the reconstruction of Fukushima from the Great East Japan Earthquake and has been conducted in accordance with relevant international safety standards and practices.

Japan will continue to provide reassurance through continuous information-sharing and thorough explanation of the issues involved, including the dissemination of the results of monitoring carried out with the continued involvement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Third, I would like to discuss the importance of strengthening various partnerships.

Japanese companies are working to solve the challenges facing SIDS, and the government is supporting their efforts.

One recent example is WOTA, a Japanese start-up, working to solve the world's water problems. This company is planning to introduce its innovative small-scale decentralized water recycling system here in Antigua and Barbuda.

JBIC, a Japanese government-affiliated financial institution, is supporting this initiative in the form of co-financing with a Japanese bank.

In the Pacific Island region, Japan has also been contributing to progress on such issues as capacity building at the Pacific Climate Change Centre (PCCC) in Samoa, while collaborating with other donors.

In order to achieve resilience and prosperity for SIDS, Japan, as a partner of SIDS, will continue to work together for the next decade, guided by The Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), the outcome document of this conference.

This year, Japan will host the 10th Pacific and Islands Summit (PALM10) in July, and the TICAD Ministerial Meeting with African countries in August.

This year is also the Japan-CARICOM Friendship Year 2024.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Kishida proposed, in his policy speech on Latin America and the Caribbean, to work together to overcome the common challenges that humanity faces in such areas as environment and climate change.

I look forward to meeting again with friends from SIDS in these regional frameworks to further deepen our exchange and cooperation.

Thank you very much for your attention.

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