

Statement by Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
Mr. MATSUMOTO Hisashi
at the 2025 United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of
Sustainable Development Goal 14
(the 2025 United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3))
NICE, 11th June 2025

Excellencies, distinguished participants,

I am MATSUMOTO Hisashi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.
I am honoured to speak at UNOC3 on behalf of the Government of Japan.

As a maritime nation surrounded by seas, Japan is firmly committed to international cooperation regarding the oceans. UNOC3 is a crucial occasion for the international community to accelerate efforts to achieve SDG 14. I would like to express my gratitude to the Governments of France and Costa Rica, as well as the United Nations, for organizing this important conference.

Japan's Prime Minister Ishiba has been personally strongly committed to the ocean. As a member of the Diet, he was one of the key figures when our "Basic Act on Ocean Policy" was enacted in 2007. Now he leads the Headquarters for Ocean Policy at the Cabinet.

In 2023, Japan updated its Basic Plan on Ocean Policy, positioning "Sustainable Use and Development of the Ocean" as one of the two main pillars alongside "Comprehensive Maritime Security".

Today, I would like to highlight three points that require further action from the international community.

The first point is about formulating and implementing international agreements. Japan has been actively engaged in crucial international agreements on the oceans.

The adoption of the BBNJ Agreement is a milestone for marine biodiversity. Following the approval by the Diet last month for the acceptance of the BBNJ Agreement, the Government of Japan is now accelerating last efforts to finalise the remaining domestic procedures with an intention to become a Party to the Agreement at the earliest possible

timing. We call on more countries to join this Agreement to ensure its swift entry into force and effective implementation.

As I highlighted the importance of the global plastic treaty at Ocean Action Panel 4, I do not repeat it here. In addition, international agreements to combat Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing are also important. We welcome that 11 new countries have joined the Port State Measures Agreement since UNOC2. Moreover, Japan accepted the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies in 2023. We call on non-signatory countries of these Agreements to accept them promptly.

The second point is about initiating and disseminating advanced initiatives toward sustainable oceans.

In addressing climate change, Japan has calculated the absorption capacity of parts of blue carbon ecosystems. The new Japan's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) submitted to the UNFCCC Secretariat in February this year includes the sequestration of blue carbon. Japan will establish the methods for calculating the sequestration of greenhouse gas (GHG) by blue carbon ecosystems and take lead in international rulemaking.

As for data on oceans, their effective use is still under development. Thus, Japan is developing the utilization of marine biological big data to get a better understanding of marine ecosystems.

We hope these efforts will serve as references for other countries.

The third point is about collaborating with other countries to realize sustainable oceans.

Proper waste management on land is key to preventing marine pollution. In 2019, Japan launched the so-called "MA.R.IN.E Initiative" to support developing countries to combat marine plastic litter, providing training for more than 30,000 officials. Japan will also promote implementation of "Jaipur Declaration on 3R and Circular Economy" and enhance "African Clean Cities Platform".

In promoting sustainable use of the oceans, it is crucial to harness the richness of the sea as an important source for improving people's lives while minimising environmental impact. We may learn from our tradition of co-existence with nature. Based on this thought, JICA, Japan's development cooperation agency, has recently launched the

"Promoting Fisheries-centred approach for Blue Economy" as its new strategy.

Including these initiatives, Japan has registered a total of 24 voluntary commitments, amounting to approximately 84 million USD, as a contribution to achieving SDG 14. We look forward to cooperating with relevant countries and organisations in these efforts.

I hope that UNOC3 will serve as an opportunity to accelerate the implementation of relevant international commitments and to further expand each country's best practices under the spirit of international cooperation, in order to achieve sustainable oceans. Let us work together to realise the coexistence of the ocean and humanity.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.