

**Country Statement by H.E. Mr. Joe NAKANO  
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs  
and the Head of the Delegation of Japan  
at the 68<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission  
for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)**

May 21, 2012

Mr. Chairperson,  
Dr. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of ESCAP,  
Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Here today, I would like to talk about the issue of sustainable development based on my country's experiences. Japan had been through rapid industrialization since the 1960s, and has achieved a high level of economic development. On the other hand, we have had to face serious environmental and health problems caused by water or air pollution, especially in 1970s. Through these experiences, Japan has been challenging to strike the right balance among the economic, social and environmental pillars in a couple of decades. And we believe that this challenge is in common in the international community of our time. The question is "how can we achieve this?" To respond this question, I would like to raise three aspects:

- protect our previous development progress from destruction;
- sustain our economic growth for the next generation;
- and
- pay attention to how we share the fruits of development among the society.

Natural disasters ruin long term development efforts in a flash. My country witnessed this on March 11<sup>th</sup> last year, when the Great East Japan Earthquake literally shook our nation, causing great damage and taking a heavy human toll. But prevention sometimes pays off. Based on a long history of fighting natural disasters, Japan had taken various preventive and risk reduction measures, which mitigated damage. We believe it is our duty to share the experience and lessons learned, and to show our gratefulness for the warmhearted assistance extended by the international community during last year's crisis. Japan will hold the High-Level International Conference on Disaster Reduction 2012 in the disaster-stricken Tohoku region in July. Japan is determined to take a leading role in mainstreaming disaster reduction and establishing a resilient society and is expecting to have a cooperation with ESCAP. I also hope that the

outcome of the July conference will contribute to the process of drafting the Post Hyogo Framework for Action and the third UN World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015.

Secondly, to sustain our economic growth for the next generation, we have to realign ourselves to the idea of a “green economy.” There is a growing understanding that this is an effective tool to realize sustainable development. Japan welcomes this trend and appreciates the role of ESCAP in promoting this trend. We expect that the transition to a green economy will be placed at the center of our strategy for balancing environmental protection and economic growth in the Asia Pacific region.

Thirdly, the fruits of the development should be shared by the whole of society with consideration for the “individual” and “equity.” Special attention should be paid to the vulnerable such as persons with disabilities and the elderly. They need to be protected and empowered to realize their full potential. The concept of human security will be instrumental to lead this process. Having this in mind, Japan is co-sponsoring the Commission resolution on the third Asian and Pacific Decade of Persons with Disabilities and is contributing to the adoption of the Incheon Strategy. Furthermore, Japan, as one of the most rapidly ageing countries in the Asia-Pacific region, with a life-expectancy of over 86 years for women and 79 years for men, would like to share its experience and continue to participate in the discussion at the intergovernmental meeting organized by ESCAP this year to review the Madrid Plan of Action.

Together with these aspects, sustainable development is hardly achievable without enhancing capacity building. In this sense, Japan appreciates the UN Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (SIAP) for conducting various training courses on statistics. A capacity to collect and utilize data disaggregated by sex, age and income is essential for each government for policy planning.

Mr. Chair,

As I have mentioned, we believe sustainable development should be protected, sustained and shared, and we appreciate ESCAP’s continuous works and efforts for more than a half century concerning these issues. Japan is ready to address the common challenges, in the process of the Rio+20 and a post-2015 development framework together with ESCAP and its member states.

Thank you.