

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Remarks by H.E Nobuteru Ishihara,
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IPCC Opening Ceremony

10:00–11:00

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Pacifico Yokohama

Dear Dr. Pachauri, distinguished delegates, and representatives from international organizations, authors of the Fifth Assessment Report, ladies and gentlemen. I am Nobuteru Ishihara, Minister of the Environment, Japan. It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to Yokohama. I am also delighted that Japan is host to this 38th Session of the IPCC and the 10th Plenary of the IPCC WGII (Working Group 2).

As you are aware, the world is experiencing an increasing number of extreme weather events such as typhoons, floods and tornados.

In fact, I visited Tuvalu and Fiji last summer and Palau last January, and I was shocked to learn that Tuvalu is barely 2 meters above sea-level. I also saw first-hand how islands become isolated due to the rise

in sea-level, and how urban areas are flooded during high tide. After seeing these climate change impacts, I realized once more how serious climate change really is.

In Japan, the highest temperature in history was recorded last summer, when we experienced extreme heat over 40 degrees Celsius, heavy rain and a series of typhoons. At the other extreme, here in Yokohama, where relatively warm area, this winter, maximum 28 centimeters of snow were recorded twice for the first time in 30 years.

With this situation in mind, Japan has been promoting climate change adaptation in the Asia Pacific region. We support knowledge-sharing through the Global Adaptation Network (GAN) which was proposed by UNEP and for which I serve as Co-chair, in order to promote global climate change adaptation.

Japan is planning to develop a climate change impact assessment report next February, and an adaptation plan across the whole of government will also be prepared in the summer of next year.

Of course, mitigation policies to reduce Green House Gases (GHGs) will also be steadily implemented.

Japan is determined to lead the global discussion on the formulation of the post-2020 framework which is to be adopted at COP21. Additionally, Japan will contribute to a major reduction in international emissions using its outstanding environmental technologies through promoting the Proactive Diplomatic Strategy for Countering Global Warming which was announced last year.

Domestically, Japan will make every effort to promote renewable energy and enhance the development, application and dissemination of advanced low-carbon technologies so that we can establish an energy efficient society. In light of this, tomorrow we are launching a new campaign to unite all of Japan to transmit climate change actions to the rest of the world. We hope this will open the door to a more eco-friendly lifestyle.

It was recently decided that the 2020 (twenty twenty) Olympic and Paralympic Games will be held in Tokyo. We aim to pay full attention to the environment, and really want to ensure that the Games in Tokyo will be the “Environment Olympics”. Using this opportunity, Tokyo will be turned into a low-carbon city so that the host city can truly become “Environmental City Tokyo”.

We in Japan have nurtured a unique natural concept, living in tune with the changing seasons, and enjoying beautiful landscapes and nature which provides us with blessings from the mountains and sea.

Here in Yokohama, the Cherry blossoms are blooming today and will be in full bloom by the end of this session.

200 years ago, there lived a poet whose name was Issa Kobayashi, and he wrote “There are no strangers under the cherry blossoms” . In this haiku poem, the poet describes the way that many people enjoy cherry blossoms in full bloom, each in their own way.

If you can enjoy the cherry blossoms, then you are certainly no stranger to others. Throughout history, people have lived in tune with nature, but this relationship will be cut if climate change continues to proceed unchecked.

As policy makers, we must recognize that there are limits to the current climate change policies and we have to understand that policy transformation is necessary.

Let me end by saying that I very much hope that the discussions at this IPCC and WGII sessions will be a success. I am sure that the resulting report will be one

to enhance global climate change actions through the meaningful discussions at this IPCC and WGII session.

Thank you very much for your attention.