

Statement by Hiroshi Minami, Deputy Director General for Global Issues of the Foreign Ministry of Japan, on Oceans and seas, forests and biodiversity at the 8th session of SDGs OWG

At the outset, we believe that oceans and seas, forests and biodiversity, these three themes are interrelated and it is pertinent to take them up as a group in this session.

Oceans and seas, forests and other secondary natures including farmlands host huge reservoirs of biodiversity, and they also provide ecosystem products and services such as food, water, timber, medicines and disaster risk reduction functions, which are essential to humankind. Biodiversity, along with oceans and forests, plays a key role in sustainable development.

Oceans host numerous number of creatures and oceans are closely related to food security and human health. Oceans are the main regulator for the climate change and an important sink for greenhouse gases. They provide the good living conditions for creatures on the land. Oceans also provide huge amount of natural resources, and therefore, we believe that oceans are an important element for sustainable development. As many speakers pointed out, oceans have many challenges now, such as marine pollution, acidification, IUU fishing and sea level rising, and we should address oceans and seas in the discussion of SDGs in a holistic manner.

On forests, 80 percent of the species on the land are living in forests, and forests are directly linked with biodiversity. In addition, obviously forests are related to poverty eradication, water management, climate change, disaster risk reduction, and others issues. Forests are also an important element of sustainable development. Sustainable forest management is the central part of this issue, and we think that the criteria and indicators established by many fora for SFM and Global Forest Resources Management by FAO will contribute to the effective monitoring and implementation of targets for forests.

Biodiversity is a serious issue to the earth and human kind, and it should be discussed in a holistic and balanced manner in this WG taking into consideration of the consistency with Aichi targets of the CBD. We should be mindful of the linkages between SDGs and the existing frameworks and conventions, so that

we should avoid duplication and we should ensure complementarity. There are several suggestions for goals on these themes, and we are in a position that the SDGs should have a limited number of goals. We are in favor of the view that biodiversity should be included as a central component of a goal which relates to the protection of ecosystems including, land, forests and oceans, if we can have such a goal.

Taking this opportunity, I just want to touch upon two things.

First, on biodiversity, we believe that sustainable use and management of natural resources in the secondary natures, such as farmland and secondary forests, are important, and to this end, Japan has been promoting Satoyama initiative which was approved at COP10 of CBD.

Second, for the conservation of biodiversity, it is important to raise awareness among the people, especially the young generations, and we are of the view that education for sustainable development and sustainability science to integrate natural, human and social sciences will play important roles to this end.