

Japan Comment 1

Japan appreciates Norway for drafting the Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the UNEA5. Please note that Japan would like to submit further comments when text of Ministerial Declaration is prepared as a next step.

Draft Outline Document for the Ministerial Outcome Document of the 2021 UN Environment Assembly

Focus on the adopted theme "Strengthening Actions for Nature to Achieve the Sustainable development Goals"

Vision: Urgent and transformative actions to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services are fundamental to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and rebuild a resilient and sustainable post-pandemic world.

Introduction: The science clearly identifies the urgent need for strengthened actions for nature to achieve sustainable development as called upon by the Rio+20 Outcome Document and Agenda 2030. COVID-19 has exposed how vulnerable our societies are and how connected we all are to each other and to nature. Healthy ecosystems are an important foundation to ensure healthy people, and loss of biodiversity undermines our individual and joint resilience. By protecting nature, we protect ourselves. Fully implementing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, including eradicating poverty, is dependent on taking these challenges seriously. The UN Environmental Assembly is our platform for joint action and to respond to the urgency and scale of the challenge, moving beyond statements to gather forces around concrete actions.

We are experiencing an alarming loss of biodiversity and ecosystems on land, in freshwater and in the oceans. Land use change, over-exploitation, climate change, pollution and invasive species are all undermining our ability to ensure a safe and healthy life for our own and generations to come. The individual threats to nature are interconnected and exacerbate each other. These complex interlinkages, and the global scale of the [human security](#) challenges, require holistic and transformative approaches from the world. That requires efforts by governments, all relevant stakeholders, including the private sector and other economic actors all over the world.

Japan Comment 2

The global scale of “challenges” are not only simple challenges but related to human security. Therefore, Japan would like to propose adding “human security”.

Rebuilding a resilient and sustainable post-pandemic world also requires a strong multilateral system, international partnerships, and dedication to effective implementation of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals and other already agreed multilateral commitments including on means of implementation in line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Together we can strengthen action to approach a positive scenario for our common home. This requires putting people and nature at the heart of decision-making.

Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) issued a clear challenge in their 2019 Global Assessment Report¹ stating that "goals for conserving and sustainably using nature and achieving sustainability cannot be met by current trajectories, and goals for 2030 and beyond may only be achieved through transformative changes across economic, social, political and technological factors." We have through our broad consultations identified three transformative areas for joint and positive action by UNEA5.

Sustainable and resilient ~~Green~~ recovery

Japan Comment 3

The term “greener” neither have clear definition nor include considerations for other values needed to respond to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, such as resilience and adaptive capacity. Japan also would like to highlight that a “green recovery” is not an internationally agreed terminology as of yet.

Now is the time to build back better. We recognize the vulnerability of our society and our economy, the importance of the role of local communities and the urgency of efforts for a post COVID-19 recovery that puts society on track for the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals through strengthened action for nature.

Japan Comment 4

On the road to the post-COVID recovery, it is important to shift our society to a new level with three key elements: decarbonization, circular and ecological economy, and decentralization. Especially, self-reliant, decentralized, strong and vital communities will play a key role. In this regard, Japan would like to propose to add this phrase.

Leadership, science-based decision-making, involvement of stakeholders, and global cooperation will only be more important in the time to come.

Ministers can promote regulations, incentives, financial instruments that respond to the COVID-19 situation while at the same time contributing to a low GHG emission economy based on sustainable production and consumption, circular economy, and a pollution-free world with vital ecosystem services and biodiversity, under the concept of virtuous cycle of environment and growth.

Japan Comment 5

A virtuous cycle of environment and growth is a well-recognized concept that G20 leaders agreed to at the Osaka Summit. The significance of this concept is on a robust economic recovery while rebuilding more sustainable, inclusive and resilient economies, in accordance with Agenda 2030, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. The virtuous cycle of environment and growth should also be an integral part of the recovery strategy.

It will be to our benefit that we reduce our environmental footprint and place people and nature at the heart of decision making.

The measures we take should work with nature and not against it and support nature-based solutions. The UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration and the 2018-2030 strategic framework

¹ IPBES (2019) Global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services

of the UNCCD are timely opportunities. Land degradation and loss of ecosystem services represent a 10% loss in global annual gross product and negatively impact on the well-being of at least 3.2 billion people². Ministers can draw attention to the benefits for biodiversity, climate change adaptation and mitigation, disaster risk reduction, benefits for the economy, welfare and potential for jobs through ecosystem restoration.

Japan Comment 6

Disaster risk reduction should be mentioned here as one of the important benefits derived from ecosystem restoration through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction.

Ministers can consider ways for the public and private sector to take better account of biodiversity and ecosystem services and contribute to mainstreaming in decision-making processes across governments and economic sectors. Ministers acknowledge that cross-sectoral approaches, including landscape approaches, offer opportunities to reconcile multiple interests, values and forms of resource use.

Japan Comment 7

Japan would like to propose the inclusion of cross-sectoral approaches including landscape approaches as they are effective for sustainability transformation.

For reference:

Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the IPBES indicates in Paragraph 30 “Sustainability transformations call for cross-sectoral thinking and approaches (Figure SPM.9).

Sectoral policies and measures can be effective in particular contexts, but often fail to account for indirect, distant and cumulative impacts, which can have adverse effects, including the exacerbation of inequalities (well established). Cross-sectoral approaches, including landscape approaches, integrated watershed and coastal zone management, marine spatial planning, bioregional scale planning for energy, and new urban planning paradigms offer opportunities to reconcile multiple interests, values and forms of resource use, provided that these cross-sectoral approaches recognize trade-offs and uneven power relations between stakeholders (established but incomplete) {5.4.2, 5.4.3, 6.3, 6.4}.”

Ministers may consider how the UN Environment Programme and the UN system as a whole can best support strengthened efforts for nature to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals across their work and to support countries in this effort.

Healthy ecosystems, healthy people - Holistic approaches to protect and restore nature and ecosystem services – including nature-based solutions

Ministers may raise attention as to the importance of healthy ecosystems as a foundation to ensure healthy people, and that the considerable loss of biodiversity is undermining our joint resilience. It is the poorest among us who are most vulnerable. Zoonotic diseases like COVID-19 expose the close relationship between nature and people. We increase our vulnerability to such diseases through environmental degradation. This pandemic reveals the associated significant cost and the need for strengthened action to avoid future emergence of

² IPBES (2018) The assessment report on land degradation and restoration.

zoonotic diseases. Recognizing the rapid loss of nature, the piece by piece loss of natural habitat and the associated increasing risk for our societies, ministers can commit to measures to strengthened cross-sectoral efforts to protect biodiversity, reverse the degradation of ecosystems and enhance ecosystem resilience. This also as important measures to urgently adapt and mitigate climate change. Ministers can promote involvement of a broad range of actors in the development and scaling up of effective actions, including indigenous peoples and local communities, local and sub-national authorities, women and youth groups. Building on this and given the developments around the order of environment-related international meetings in 2021, the ministers can commit to the development and effective implementation of an ambitious and realistic post-2020 global biodiversity framework to be adopted at the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to be held in China.

Japan Comment 8

Japan would like to propose the same wording as CBD COP decision 14/34

“Comprehensive and participatory process for the preparation of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.” Paragraph 12(a) of the decision indicates as following;

12. An initial discussion document summarizing and analysing the initial views of Parties and observers will be made available in January 2019. This initial discussion document, and subsequent comments on it by Parties and observers and stakeholders, will be further developed in an iterative manner, drawing on the various consultations, inputs and review processes, providing the basis for the documentation to be considered in the intersessional period. The documentation will provide a basis for discussing: Scope, elements and structure of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; (a) Considerations related to ambitious, realistic and, where possible, measurable, time-bound targets and corresponding indicators, reporting and monitoring frameworks and baselines to be developed in a coherent way.

Ministers can also emphasise the importance for enhancing synergies at all levels between the biodiversity related conventions and other multilateral environmental agreements in order to efficiently contribute to the implementation of the post 2020 global biodiversity framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Ministers should also consider ways to strengthen the global response to climate change in line with support the work of the UNFCCC and the Paris aAgreement and, thus contributing to successfulthe 26th Conference of the Parties in 2021 by settling all the remaining issues of the Paris Agreement Implementation Guidelines, and the negotiations of the beyond 2020 instrument for the sound management of chemicals and waste.

Japan Comment 9

It is important to implement climate action, completing all the work on remaining issues, such as the market mechanisms, the transparency framework etc. at COP26 rather than supporting the work of UNFCCC.

Marine plastic litter is one of threats to biodiversity. With the onslaught of COVID-19 there is a surge in production and consumption of masks and protective equipment, which are mostly plastic products. Without irony, there is a renewed realization of the importance and value of plastic but that does not change the gravity of the plastic litter problem, if anything it is making more sense to adopt a life-cycle approach taking into consideration the national situations and the specific barriers each country is facing. Furthermore, Ministers should urgently act towards Sustainable Development Goal 14 (target 14.1 by 2025), aim to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, and take swift actions to promote comprehensive life-cycle approach and cooperate to share scientific knowledge and best

practices. In this regard, the ad hoc open-ended expert group on marine plastic litter and microplastics (AHEG), established by resolution 3/7 of the UNEA, to fulfil its given mandate, submits summary reports to UNEA5. The report includes existing activities and actions, technical and financial resources or mechanisms, and response options such as analysis and examination of feasibility and effectiveness. Ministers welcome the AHEG's substantial contribution.

Furthermore, UNEP International Environmental Technology Centre (IETC), as the global center of excellence on environmentally sound technologies with focusing on holistic waste management, has been carrying out various projects such as sound management of waste or mercury and development of countermeasures against marine plastic litter notably mentioned in Osaka Blue Ocean Vision shared at the G20 Summit in 2019.

Japan Comment 10

Marine plastic litter issue is rapidly increasing as a serious environmental problem on a global scale. At the same time, there is a renewed realization of the importance and value of plastic due to the onslaught of COVID-19. Without irony, there is a renewed realization of the importance and value of plastic but that does not change the gravity of the plastic litter problem, if anything it is making more sense to adopt a life-cycle approach. Reducing additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, through a comprehensive life-cycle approach, was called upon in the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision. The Vision is already shared by more than 80 countries, regions, and regional organizations around the world. To this end, Japan would like to propose to embed a call for all countries in the world to unite in embracing the goal to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 in the declaration of the UNEA-5. In order to achieve this vision, it is important to share measures for peer learning and scientific knowledge for evidence based efficient policy.

Sustainable food systems – a part of the solution

Meeting the world's increasing demand for food while still reducing agriculture's environmental impacts is one of the defining challenges of our time, as stated in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) 2019 Global Assessment Report. Addressing solutions to the food system is an important opportunity for ministers at the environment assembly, as well as for the private sector, farmers and other stakeholders. Among the findings of the IPBES report is that feeding humanity and enhancing the conservation and sustainable use of nature are complementary and closely interdependent goals. They can be advanced through sustainable agriculture, aquaculture and livestock systems, the safeguarding of native species, varieties, breeds and habitats, and ecological restoration.

The ministerial declaration can contribute to the growing understanding and attention to the environmental dimension of sustainable food systems, including how improvements in the different parts of the food systems are important for both people's livelihood and health, the environment and the economy, and its significance to be able to provide a healthy and affordable diet to the global population in decades to come. This is critical to achieve the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. Ministers can highlight important

approaches and solutions that are available and contribute to further measures to strengthen action at the UN Food Summit in 2021.