

Japan Statement, 28 November 2022
under agenda item 4

The first session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Muchas gracias Sr Presidente, felicitaciones por su eleccion.

Japan associates itself with the Statement by Jordan on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group.

Japan is proactively addressing plastic pollution. Japan wishes to take a leading role in the INC to produce an effective and progressive instrument for all States.

The INC should fully capitalize on the wide and strong support to the “End plastic pollution” resolution.

Directly going to substance, Japan considers the following to be essential elements of the instrument.

First, general and simple objectives, centered around the mitigation of adverse impact by plastic pollution to the environment and biodiversity and to protect human health from potential risks. Plastic is useful and can be reused and recycled. Plastic itself is not entirely dangerous. Risks should be considered carefully based on solid scientific evidence. The issue is not eliminating plastic. What would have happened without syringes for COVID-19 vaccines? It is essentially about circular use of plastic, and finding viable alternatives to non-essential plastic.

Second element: a clear common goal. A possible goal is aiming to reduce additional plastic pollution particularly in the marine environment to zero by a certain year. The Osaka Blue Ocean Vision is now shared by more than 80 countries and regions. The target year is 2050. Now there is growing support to the target year 2040.

Let's negotiate an ambitious goal agreeable to all, together with the rest of the text.

Third, an appropriate mechanism to be established by States to promote an essential and effective circular economy on plastic and to control leakage. It should engage all the stakeholders from industries to civil society.

Member States must take necessary measures covering every stage of plastic lifecycle, including production, sales, distribution, consumption, waste management and disposal, to realize a reduce, reuse, recycle and renewable society. The instrument should provide a list of effective measures from which Parties will choose, taking into account national circumstances and capabilities.

There are various pathways. One-size-fits-all restrictions on the production or use of plastic may not work for all countries.

Fourth, national action plans including all relevant national measures, mid-term and long-term strategies and other appropriate relevant information. National plans and their implementation would be reviewed collectively in light of the objectives and goal under a robust and transparent PDCA cycle, making it possible for all States to progressively improve their efforts.

Capacity-building, technical assistance and financial assistance should be addressed. The content may vary corresponding to the level of ambition of the objectives, goal, obligations and measures. We should negotiate those first. Japan is willing to continue support to States without enough capacity.

I am pleased to announce that Japan, to express strong commitment, is planning to contribute approximately 820,000 USD to the budget of UNEP for the organization of INC 1 to INC 3, pending approval by the Diet of Japan.

Blaise Pascal said: 'The least movement is of importance to all nature. The entire ocean is affected by a pebble.'

Let's act together for our ocean, for our planet.

Thank you.

Japan Statement, 30 November 2022

The first session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment under agenda item 4

Scope, objective(s) and options for the structure of the instrument

Potential elements, including elements: a. Core obligations, control measures and voluntary approaches as well as national action plans; b. Means of implementation, including capacity building, technical assistance, and finance;

The following points should be considered:

- Technological and scientific characteristics of plastics and their high-utility in the socio-economic context
- There is no sufficient established scientific data showing negative impacts of plastic pollution on human health and the environment
- Engagement by both plastic consuming and emitting countries is a key factor
- Plastic pollution needs be tackled through full-lifecycle approach, taking into account national circumstances and capacities

Objectives and goal:

- Halting and reversing biodiversity loss, protect human health from potential risks caused by plastic pollution including in the marine environment while recognizing the important role of plastic for society
- Related risks of plastic pollution to human health should be carefully considered based on the future progress of scientific knowledge and evidence
- Setting a clear global common goal such as Osaka Blue Ocean Vision or its advanced version in the instrument.
- Feasible approach would be all Member States aim to reduce additional plastic pollution particularly in the marine environment to zero by a certain year
- Substantial issues come first. Structure should be corresponding to substance particularly obligations and measures

Obligations and measures:

- Parties shall establish an appropriate mechanism in the whole society to promote circular economy on plastic and control plastic leakage into the marine and other environment.
- Parties shall take all necessary measures to promote reduce, reuse, recycle and renewable measures in society by selecting appropriate effective measures which cover whole lifecycle stage of plastics taking into account national circumstances

- Measures chosen by Parties shall be reflected in national action plans and their efforts should be reported and reviewed periodically
 - Checking the global progress made by all Parties is necessary. Implementation of fundamental measures to prevent leakage such as waste management should be given priority
 - The national action plan should include targets and actions in the medium-term and long-term strategies towards realization of the global goal and objectives of the instrument
 - Imposing a ban of the production or use of plastic should be categorized as a voluntary measure taking into account national circumstances and its socioeconomic impacts including its effectiveness
 - Parties shall promote reduction of unnecessary single-use plastics which are not covered by the circular economy system
 - A transparent and robust PDCA mechanism for assessment of member states' action based on the standardized and periodic reporting and peer review should be established
 - The mechanism should ensure continued and strengthened actions of the individual countries and their collective achievement towards the global goal

A list of measures that Parties may choose from:

<Production stage>

Reduction of plastic usage, promoting sustainable product design for the environment, promoting development and usage of substitute materials, reduction of unnecessary single-use plastics, collecting and recycling used plastic by production sectors

<Distribution/consumption stage>

Reduction of unnecessary single-use plastics, collecting and recycling used plastics by distribution/consumption sectors

< Waste management and disposal stage>

Sorting, collecting and recycling plastics at municipality level, engagement by waste management industries to reduce plastic waste and enhance recycling, crackdown on illegal dumping, sound waste disposal and collecting coastal plastic debris.

Capacity building, technical assistance and financial assistance

- Capacity building, technical assistance and financial system should be addressed in a correct manner. Content may vary corresponding to the level of ambition of the objectives, goals, obligations and measures. All parties to the treaty should equally respond to the common objectives and common goal.

Japan is willing to continue to support bilaterally mostly to States without capacity to implement measures including waste management

- We should prioritize those countries who are most in need.

Japan Statement, 1st December 2022

The first session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment under agenda item 4

-Support to monitoring and evaluation of progress in, and effectiveness of implementation and national reporting;

National Action Plans will constitute the most essential part of the instrument particularly with regard to monitoring and evaluating implementation and progress.

National action plans and implementation of the plans shall be reviewed collectively under a robust and transparent PDCA mechanism, in light of the objectives and common goal of the instrument. Experts on plastic and the Conference of Parties will have a role in the peer review.

The mechanism should ensure the continued progressive strengthening of actions of all individual Parties and also collective achievement over time towards the global goal.

An instrument allowing the progressive strengthening of efforts is important taking into account the fact that science and technology is expected to make progress.

The implementation of fundamental measures to prevent leakage, including waste management should be monitored as a priority.

National Action Plans shall be updated regularly. The updated plans shall not be less ambitious than the previous plan.

In order to facilitate comparison of efforts, there should be a common format for the NAP. The format used in the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter may serve as a basis for the instrument. The G20 format was

agreed by G20, of course, a group which includes many countries where plastic is produced and from which there is plastic pollution into the ocean.

The format includes:

Legal Framework, National Action Plan, Measures (Environmentally sound waste management, Cleanup of marine plastic litter, Promotion of innovative solutions, Education and awareness raising, Monitoring & Scientific research on marine plastic litter, Best practices, (National level, Local Level, Private sector, International cooperation).

The periodic stocktake of global efforts should also take place regularly.

-Other aspects, including scientific and technical cooperation and coordination, research and awareness raising;

Japan recognize that science is important. However, we are not sure that all delegations here have a common basis of science. Scientific data and socio-economic knowledge of plastic pollution are still limited and therefore, it would be crucial to take advantage of data and knowledge possessed by international, regional and national research institutions in close cooperation.

We propose that comprehensive monitoring be conducted on the current situation of plastic pollution including where it takes place, how much is emitted, how it moves, what is the forecast. We should enrich scientific knowledge regarding the ecological impacts of plastic pollution. To establish common methodology, harmonizing the guidelines of monitoring would be necessary.

It is necessary to develop a continuous reporting mechanism. Parties will have to continuously report the volume of plastic litter emitted in their territory. Guidelines for a common inventory would be required to ensure comparability of data. It is necessary

to evaluate the progress of implementation of the instrument. For that, objective and regular comparison of plastic emissions by country and monitoring progress will be key.

Japan would prefer to have discussions on an eventual subsidiary body on science and technology further down the road, in a coordinated manner with provisions on scientific and technical cooperation and provisions on research.

-Stakeholder participation and action

Japan supports robust participation of stakeholders in the development and implementation of the instrument. In order for States to promote an essential and effective circular economy on plastic, taking into account national circumstances, involvement and efforts by the stakeholders are critical. We welcome engagement with the stakeholders including but not limited to the civil society, industry, academia, local communities and regional organizations, in the INC process in the form of multi-stakeholder forums or intersessional inputs. The multi-stakeholder forum in INC2 could be two days long within the available funds. In addition to expressions of opinions and positions, we look forward to factual and concrete written contributions in a timely manner, so that the richness of their knowledge and experience can be adequately taken into account in each delegation's preparation to the negotiations. Lessons learned, success stories, best practices, scientific findings, information on technological advances are welcome. It will be up to the delegations to translate the input into legal language. We support the holding of an intersessional online multi-stakeholder forum well in advance of INC2. In person discussions, written contributions and online exchanges will together create synergy. That is what post COVID-19 multi-stakeholder diplomacy is about.

Japan is ready to discuss provisions on the involvement of stakeholders in the implementation of the instrument at the appropriate timing. There are useful precedents including

Minamata.

Japan is also ready to engage directly with stakeholders. We are doing so domestically, and internationally. Such contacts add reality to our negotiations. We will continue to engage with stakeholders until the instrument is adopted and, of course, beyond in the implementation phase.

Japan Statement, 2nd December 2022

The first session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment under agenda item 4 “Sequencing and recommended further work to be undertaken”

Chair,

The delegation of Japan expresses gratitude to the Chair and the co-facilitators of the informal group for listening carefully to the views of Committee Members on the issues of intersessional work and engagement of multi-stakeholders.

The report by the co-facilitators was the result of long discussions over the past few days, and my delegation respects the outcome.

INC2 seems so far away, I mean in time. For me, personally, and for Japan, as a delegations, it will probably be after an important diplomatic event Japan will host in May. In order to use the time in between efficiently, delegations have to do their homework. Our delegation will certainly do so. We have come to the beautiful city of Punta del Este, also renowned as the sacred city for trade lawyers in the context of the Uruguay round, with certain ideas on how the instrument will look like. We have heard each other. Each delegation will have to take home what we have heard, including from the stakeholders in the multi-stakeholders forum, and from the statements of observers from the floor, as well as through informal contacts in the hall. We have to capitalize on the enthusiasm of UNEA resolution 5/14 and start transforming the energy into essential elements and then into legal text. In this regard, we should perhaps remind ourselves that international instruments address primarily the States Parties. We should be discussing what obligations or voluntary measures the State Party is to undertake. In treaty language, we are talking about Parties shall do something, Parties are encouraged to do something, or Parties shall endeavor to do something. Then, usually, the Parties follow by domestic legislation or policy in an appropriate manner. Japan never becomes a party of an international agreement without passing the necessary domestic measures at the same time or beforehand. This is to

secure full compliance from day one.

Japan will participate actively in the intersessional work including the submission of a written contribution, and the multi-stakeholder engagement. On working methods in INC2 and beyond, the delegation of Japan accepts the two streams of work proposed by the Chair. Japan agrees to the need to work expeditiously and effectively. I have heard differing positions this week on priorities among the elements. Capacity building depends on the obligations, control measures and assessment of progress. Obligations and measures depend on national capacity to implement, for instance. The bottom line, is that there is a correlation among the elements. Japan will engage seriously in both work streams, it being understood that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. As I stated before, the instrument must be an effective instrument for all States. I recall that the Statement made by Jordan on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group stressed that the instrument should encourage participation and actions by all countries, whether large or small, developed or developing, island or continental, coastal or land locked.

A medida que nos acercamos al final de la semana, esta delegación quisiera expresar su agradecimiento al Presidente, Embajador Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, por su excelente liderazgo. También agradecemos a los amigos del Presidente, la secretaria del Programa de las Naciones Unidas para el Medio Ambiente, el país anfitrión y la ciudad anfitriona, los intérpretes y todo el personal que ha hecho posible esta importante reunión.

También agradezco a todos los delegados y observadores, incluidas las organizaciones internacionales y todas las partes interesadas, en particular los representantes de la juventud y los pequeños Estados insulares en desarrollo, por su participación activa y constructiva.

Como dije en mi declaración de apertura, sigamos trabajando juntos por nuestro océano y por nuestro planeta.

Muchas gracias