

**Statement by Mr. Yasuhisa Nakao, Deputy Vice Minister of Finance for International Affairs,
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1. Introduction

Your Excellencies Prime Minister Phúc, Minister Ha, CEO Ishii, representatives of countries and organizations, ladies and gentlemen.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of Vietnam, the host country of the Assembly, and the citizens of Da Nang for their warm hospitality.

2. Evaluation and Expectations for the GEF

(1) The Seventh Replenishment

I would like to offer my heartfelt congratulations on the recent successful conclusion of the GEF Seventh Replenishment (GEF-7) negotiations with pledges of funds totaling 4.1 billion dollars, which surpassed the record amount of funds pledged at the previous replenishment in real terms.

The successful replenishment is evidence of the high regard that the international community has for the substantial results that the GEF has achieved through the implementation of effective and innovative projects.

I am also pleased that broad support has been provided to the GEF-7 Programming Directions, which include enhancing value for money through the introduction of the Impact Programs that bring benefits to multiple sectors, increasing resource allocations to low-income countries and vulnerable countries, and strengthening engagement with the private sector. Albeit GEF's limited financial resources, these policy measures will significantly contribute to the maximization of the impacts of the GEF projects. I pay my respects to CEO Ishii of the GEF and Vice President Axel van Trotsenburg of the World Bank for their efforts that have led to the successful conclusion of the difficult negotiations.

Although Japan's fiscal situation is severe, the government of Japan has decided to make the largest-ever financial contributions of USD 637 million, an increase of 5% in terms of the U.S. dollar from the last replenishment. As the top donor, Japan will continue to work with the GEF in protecting the global environment.

Global environmental problems, particularly those related to the GEF's areas of support, such as biodiversity, chemicals and waste, climate change, land degradation, and international waters, are all important and must be addressed urgently. Today, I would like to talk about two of those challenges in particular.

(2) Chemicals Management under the Minamata Convention on Mercury

First, let me touch upon the chemicals management under the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

Chemical residues in the environment could affect human health and ecosystems in various ways, so it is necessary to take every possible control measure. In this area, Japan has been striving to globally share the lessons of Minamata disease that was caused by mercury pollution in particular. In order to promote global cooperation in taking control measures and prevent the recurrence of mercury pollution incidents anywhere in the world, the Minamata Convention on Mercury was adopted at a diplomatic conference held in Japan in 2013 and was put into effect in August last year.

Under this convention, the GEF is designated as a financial mechanism to support developing countries. Japan expects that the GEF will actively support the efforts to implement the Minamata Convention.

(3) Biodiversity Conservation through the Aichi Targets

Second, I would like to discuss biodiversity conservation under the Aichi Targets.

Japan also has strong interest in biodiversity, since the Japanese people have long lived in good harmony with nature. In this area, the 10th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (COP 10) in Nagoya City, Aichi Prefecture in 2010 adopted the Aichi Targets for countries in addressing biodiversity conservation. The GEF has been a strong driving force of efforts to achieve the targets. Japan expects that the GEF will continue to make active efforts in this respect as the year 2020, the deadline for the Aichi Targets, approaches.

3. Conclusion

Your Excellencies Prime Minister Phuc, Minister Ha, CEO Ishii, representatives of countries and organizations, ladies and gentlemen.

If we consider the global importance of the GEF's role, which is protecting the global environment, it is necessary for the international community as a whole to continue supporting the GEF and make efforts to strengthen its operations. The successful conclusion of the GEF-7 negotiations reflects the international community's resolve to do so. Japan expects that the GEF will continue to execute its mission under CEO Ishii's outstanding leadership.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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