



Statement by Japan
at the Twenty-First Meeting of
the United Nations Open-Ended Informal Consultative Process
on Oceans and the Law of the Sea
“Sea-level rise and its impacts”

14 June 2021

At the outset, Japan would like to take this opportunity to thank the Co-Chairs, Ambassador Isabelle F. Picco of the Principality of Monaco and Ambassador Viliami Va'inga Tōnē of the Kingdom of Tonga, for their dedicated efforts in ensuring to convene this meeting despite the continuing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan deems that the theme of this meeting, “Sea level rise and its impacts”, is the imperative and pressing issue in the worldwide.

Climate change requires immediate action by the international community, and therefore, Japan welcomes the decision in General Assembly resolution 74/19 to focus the discussions of the Informal Consultative Process at its twenty-first meeting on the theme “Sea-level rise and its impacts”.

Japan aims to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 46% by fiscal year 2030 from its fiscal year 2013 levels, setting an ambitious target which is aligned with the long-term goal of net-zero by 2050, as announced by Prime Minister Suga in his statement delivered on 22 April during the Leaders’ Summit on Climate hosted by the United States. He stressed in the statement

that Japan will continue to make strenuous efforts in its challenge to meet the lofty goal of cutting its emission by 50%.

This goal of a 46% reduction means that Japan will raise its current target by more than 70 percent, and it will certainly not be an easy task. However, by defining a top-level ambitious target befitting a next growth strategy for a nation which underpins manufacturing in the world, Japan is ready to demonstrate its leadership in the quest for worldwide decarbonization.

Related to sea-level rise, Japan upheld Climate Change and the Ocean as the theme of the International Conference on Climate Change and Fragility in the Asia-Pacific Region 2019, the details of which can be seen at https://www.mofa.go.jp/ic/ch/page24e_000259.html.

As referred to in the Summary Report of the Conference (<https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100015244.pdf>), sea-level rise may lead to various issues including an increased risk of natural disasters and ocean acidification that can damage fishery resources. Japan continues to contribute to the debate on these serious issues through multiple fora and events.

We would also like to mention that sea-level rise could possibly produce new legal issues regarding the law of the sea, such as recession of the baseline and the submergence of remote islands in border areas. Japan wishes to tackle these issues with the international community, taking into account relevant ongoing discussions in the International Law Commission. It is critical to discuss these issues considering the consistency with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas, must be carried out.

Thank you.