

Speech by H.E. Ambassador Tsukada Tamaki
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at the Preparatory Meeting for the United Nations Conference to Support the
Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably
use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development,
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The fundamental message that should come out of the Conference should be - that a sustainable ocean economy is critical to achieve the Agenda 2030, and that ocean-based industries and action can create wealth while contributing to a healthy planet - Production, protection and prosperity can go hand in hand if we sustainably use and conserve the ocean.

With reference to your question of areas of action - we think marine plastic litter deserves pride of place. At the Osaka Summit last June, the G20 nations agreed to share the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, which calls upon countries to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 through a comprehensive life-cycle approach that includes reducing the discharge of mismanaged plastic litter by improved waste management and innovative solutions. In order to realize this vision, we have presented a comprehensive framework of action which is designed to promote specific actions to combat marine litter through continuous sharing of new information.

We would like to call upon all countries around the world to work together to participate in implementing this vision. To this end, we propose to embed in the declaration of the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference, a call for all countries in the world to unite in embracing the goal to bring additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050 - this can be turned into a commitment which is specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound, but at the same time transformative.

This Vision is already shared and indigenized by more than 50 countries, regions, and regional organizations around the world. We think that the UN ocean conference will provide the necessary additional momentum to introduce this vision to a wider audience and transform it into a collective movement of global coverage to combat marine plastic litter.

Driving innovation and mobilizing technologies will be critical in this effort. It will open up unprecedented opportunities, and ultimately, solutions. Companies, large and small, startups and scientists in Japan and all over the world, are striving to develop and promote bio-degradable plastics alternatives that are soluble in the sea. One Japanese company, along with a university, has recently co-developed a very promising prototype of biomass marine biodegradable plastic bags that can avert pollution caused by conventional plastic bags. Furthermore, the government of Japan is conducting research and analysis on commercially viable, environmentally-friendly plastic-alternative materials, as well as innovative packaging and recycling technologies, in collaboration with UNIDO.

It is our strong desire to continue promoting international partnerships to advance collaboration, leveraging innovations from the latest technologies, eventually scaling up through the power of private sector and market, to effectively combat marine plastic litter. International cooperation with our developing partners in particular small island developing states and least developed countries will be an important component in this effort. Such cooperation involving multiple stakeholders, public and the private, developed and developing countries, is indispensable to achieve the SDGs.

Science has to inform and facilitate governance, planning and Resource management to set us on a path toward a healthy ocean and a sustainable ocean economy, including controlling illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, protecting coastal blue carbon ecosystems such as seaweed beds and tidal flats, monitoring the impacts of climate change on marine environment and promoting the UN Decade of Ocean Science.

Lastly I would like highlight the thematic approach to Food in the ocean context where we can leverage synergies. Food from the ocean has the potential to supply many times over the food available today. It can help combat hunger malnutrition, support new industries and cumulatively reduce carbon emissions.

Japan will host the Tokyo Nutrition for growth summit in December 2020. Food system will be one of the key themes and outcomes of the summit - We will commit ourselves to building food systems that promote healthy diets and nutrition, ensure livelihoods of producers, and are climate-smart, because we know that the food the world produces and consumes impacts both people and planet. We believe that there is an important nexus between Nutrition and Ocean that deserves special political attention and we think year 2020 provides the ideal space to do so.