

Statement by Kenji Manabe
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Environment Agency of Japan
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Your Excellency, President Alsogaray, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my great honor to have this opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the Japanese Government.

Madam President,

In December last year, we gathered at Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan, and unanimously adopted the Kyoto Protocol after very long and difficult negotiations.

The Kyoto Protocol was successfully concluded, setting legally-binding emission limitation and reduction targets with a view to reducing overall greenhouse gas emissions of the Annex I countries by at least 5%. I believe this adoption of the Kyoto Protocol is an important step in the history of our concerted efforts to address climate change.

Madam President,

In recent years, world temperatures have recorded the highest levels in the past century, and many parts of the world have experienced severe floods and droughts. I have personally heard many voices from my fellow Ministers of Asia and Pacific countries expressing their sense of urgency regarding the serious impacts of climate change.

I am convinced that there is an urgent need to keep the momentum that we gained in Kyoto and to move forward to take the next steps. For this purpose, I would like to draw your special attention to the following three points.

First, it is important for all countries to take domestic actions as early as possible. Every country should further strengthen measures to address climate change.

In Japan, the Government adopted in June this year a "Guideline of Measures to Prevent Global Warming" focusing on measures to be promoted toward 2010. As its major pillars, first, we enacted the Law for Promotion of Measures to Cope with Global Warming in October this year to promote actions to be taken by all the relevant sectors of the society. This Law is the first one dedicated solely to climate change. Next, based on amendments to the Law concerning Rational Use of Energy in June this year, we will strengthen energy efficiency standards by introducing the "Top-Runner's Approach" for automobiles and electric appliances. Thirdly, the Government will encourage voluntary actions by industries.

The Government of Japan will mobilize all possible policy instruments in a comprehensive manner, with a view to achieving real and measurable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions domestically.

Second, we need to make every effort to reach agreement on important issues as much as possible, which include rules for the mechanisms as stipulated in the Kyoto Protocol, with a view to forming a basis for the early entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol.

Japan hosted an Informal Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change in Tokyo on September 17-18 this year in order to promote international negotiation.

As a consequence of the meeting, Ministers and senior officials shared the political will to make constructive discussion to achieve maximum progress within the limited time available, by focusing on those issues on which we can agree in order to make COP4 a success.

I believe it is essential for all Parties to share this political will and need to take political leadership in order to make COP4 a success. In particular, it is necessary that all Parties agree on a work plan on flexible mechanisms with a clear time table, which is under negotiation.

Third, from a long term point of view, it is essential for both developed and developing countries to cooperate in promoting global actions to address climate change. I strongly hope that this Conference will be able to start a new process of international dialogue to promote such global actions.

For this purpose, Japan is actively implementing the Kyoto Initiative, which we announced during the Kyoto Conference; for example, by enhancing capacity building in developing countries, providing official development assistance loans under the most concessional terms and promoting transfer of technology and know-how.

In addition, we will take the lead in the examination of methodologies for estimating anthropogenic emissions by sources and removals by sinks, through our activities in the newly established IPCC Inventory Task Force.

Madam President,

Six years ago, we signed the Framework Convention on Climate Change in the same continent of South America. And last year, we adopted the historic Kyoto Protocol.

Let us forge a strong alliance of all countries and fulfill our promises we made in Kyoto, to hand over environment of quality worth living in to our children in the 21th century.

Thank you for your attention.