Statement by Mr. Noboru Sekiguchi,
Minister, Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
At the Comprehensive High-level Mid-term Review of the Istanbul Programme of Action
for the Least Developed Countries for the decade 2011-2020
27-29 May 2016, Antalya, Turkey

Mr. President,
Excellencies,

Let me start by thanking the Government and people of Turkey for hosting this important conference in the beautiful city of Antalya with such abundant hospitality.

This conference provides us with a valuable opportunity to reconfirm our collective commitment to the Istanbul Programme of Action (IPoA) and review the course of its implementation in order to ensure its full implementation by 2020. It comes at a timely occasion following the multiple adoptions in 2015 of several important documents that are important for the implementation of the IPoA; namely, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction. Additionally, the World Humanitarian Summit which just took place in Istanbul also provides important context.

Mr. President,

A number of LDCs have made considerable progress in the last five years with strong national ownership supported by global partnership. Such progress should be accelerated to achieve the goals of the IPoA by 2020 within the context of 2030 Agenda. In this regard, full implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is necessary, both by LDCs and their all partners.

Let me touch on the concrete steps that Japan has taken in this regard.

First, in order to align its assistance policies to the sustainable development goals, last year the Government of Japan adopted the Development Cooperation Charter with a subtitle “for peace, prosperity and a better future for everyone.” This was aimed at ensuring a more integrated and coherent approach in our policy towards sustainable development. The Charter also reiterates our strong emphasis on partnership in development cooperation in order to mobilise all sources and expertise for common goals. Along with these policies, this Japanese fiscal year we managed to increase our ODA budget for the first time in 17 years even under the difficult budgetary condition. In addition, Japan recently contributed an additional 3.5 million US dollars to the UN Peacebuilding Fund, which is mainly used to support Sub-Saharan African countries to recover from and prevent conflict.

Secondly, Japan’s assistance to LDCs has always been aimed at poverty reduction through economic growth. This philosophy comes from our own experiences as well as those of other Asian countries. Our assistance is also founded on the notion of human security, which is well reflected in the 2030 Agenda and the IPoA. Based on these fundamental policies, we have been focusing on providing quality infrastructure that is both sustainable and resilient. Last year, the Government of Japan announced to provide 110 billion US dollars for quality infrastructure investment in Asia over five years, and our efforts do not stop in Asia. This week, Prime Minister Abe unveiled “the Expanded Partnership for Quality Infrastructure”, which aims to provide financing of approximately 200 billion US dollars to
infrastructure projects across the world. Last year, here in Antalya, we organised the Workshop on Quality Infrastructure Investment to promote this notion.

In the area of resilience, especially resilience to natural disasters and disaster risk reduction (DRR), we announced at the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai last year our intention to provide DRR cooperation totalling 4 billion US dollars and to train 40 thousand disaster resilience experts between 2015 to 2018 as part of the Sendai Initiative for Disaster Risk Reduction. One of the focus areas of this support will be adaptation to climate change, with particular consideration for the needs of the LDCs, and utilizing Japan’s knowledge and technology for disaster risk reduction.

This brings me to the third step Japan is taking: it’s about Africa. Africa is home to 34 of the world’s 48 LDCs and therefore the sustainable development of Africa is of major concern to Japan. Japan has been co-organising the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) every five years since 1993. This year, for the first time, TICAD summit meeting will be held in Africa, hosted by Kenya. This will be an important occasion to deepen our discussion and partnerships on critical issues such as structured economic transformation, resilient health system and social stability, while at the same time promoting Africa’s efforts towards achieving the 2030 Agenda as well as Agenda 2063.

Last but not the least; Japan just successfully hosted the G7 Ise-Shima Summit. There, leaders discussed sustainable development together with partners from Asia and the Pacific and Africa and reiterated their commitments to implement the 2030 Agenda at home and abroad. To lead these efforts, Japan launched the SDGs Promotion Headquarters headed by the Prime Minister for domestic and international implementation and also announced initiatives on global health and empowerment of women.

Mr. President,

Health issues are vitally important to achieving sustainable development and are especially crucial in the LDCs, in order to lead the G7’s efforts on public health emergency response, the promotion of universal health coverage (UHC) and measures against antimicrobial resistance (AMR), Japan will provide support totalling about 1.1 billion US dollars to the Global Fund, Gavi, GHIT and others, including our aim of contributing 800 million US dollars to the Global Fund in the coming years.

There is no doubt that women are the source of growth and social stability. With this in mind, Japan announced a new strategy called the “Development Strategy for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment” with a focus on promoting women’s rights, exercising women’s full potential and advancing women’s leadership. Over the next three years, we will conduct human resource development programme for about 5,000 female officials and professionals while also improving the learning environment benefiting about 50,000 female girls.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude my statement by reiterating our ambition to achieve the IPoA and the 2030 Agenda in order to leave no one behind.

Thank you for your kind attention.