

Japan Statement, 23 April 2024
under agenda item 4

The Fourth session of Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution, including in the marine environment

Chair,

Japan expresses its sincere gratitude to the government of Canada for kindly hosting the Fourth session of INC here in Ottawa.

We support the statements made by Palestine on behalf of the Asia Pacific Group, and Malawi on behalf of HAC.

Japan appreciates continuous tireless efforts by the Chair and the Secretariat on your diligent preparation for the INC4. We very much appreciate the Chair's leadership so that we can streamline further the revised draft text in this round of negotiations.

We would like to highlight here the following four necessary points for the plastic treaty.

First, the instrument should have a clear time-bound target in its objective so that all countries are encouraged to implement coordinated actions to attain the target and further scale up their efforts to end plastic pollution. For this reason, we reiterate that a clear milestone to reduce additional plastic pollution to zero by 2040 and further efforts thereafter should be stipulated in the text.

Second, we stress the need to have overarching obligations prior to individual control measures. They are fundamental obligations which require each party to establish a plastic circularity mechanism in society with its integrated and holistic national policies, and to implement necessary efforts throughout the plastic lifecycle from upstream to downstream in order to promote plastic circularity and prevent the plastic leakage into the environment.

The effective measures should also be listed in the Annex , whether they are mandatory or voluntary, so that they are reflected in the National

Action Plans on which a clear policy roadmap will include those listed measures. We attach an explanatory note on the overarching provisions to this statement.

Third, regarding individual control measures, effective measures are needed to further prevent plastic pollution. Not by setting a universal limit on production of plastics, but by making ambitious efforts for reducing single-use plastics, promoting environmentally-friendly product design to generate changes in demand and people's behaviour, and enhancing reuse, recycling and sound waste management, we believe that such various efforts will significantly contribute to the reduction in volume of plastic use and promote a sustainable production and consumption of plastics.

Fourth, for means of implementation, financial support should be provided to countries most in need and for measures that are most effective and cost-efficient to prevent emission and release of plastics, which are well-planned in advance within local communities and coordinated with regional, subregional or national arrangement. In particular, establishing a basic waste management system at the local level is essential, which could also work for other types of wastes and lead to sustainable industrialization by reuse, recycling or use of alternative materials to induce private sector's investment. On this point, we also include in this statement an explanatory note on our proposal for financial assistance.

At this juncture of our negotiation, time is of the essence. It is crucial for us to make further progress in our substantial discussions through INC4 and intersessional work until INC5 in order to finish our work by the end of this year. With this sense of urgency in mind, Japan would not spare our efforts to contribute to the discussions further constructively during this INC4 session.

Thank you.

(Attachments follow this page.)

13 bis. Overarching provision related to Part II

1. Parties shall establish an effective mechanism in society to promote plastic circularity and prevent the leakage of plastics into environment through a whole-of-society approach by adopting integrated and holistic national policies.

2. Parties shall take the necessary measures at all stages of plastic lifecycle, such as the production, distribution, sale, consumption, waste management and disposal, to promote plastic circularity and prevent the leakage of plastics into the environment and strengthen the measures over time towards achieving the objective of this instrument.

3. In relation to the previous paragraph, Parties shall take the effective measures at each stage of plastic lifecycle listed in Annex X.¹ The mandatory and voluntary measures listed in annex X shall be reflected accordingly in the national action plan. The *governing body** can review the annex as necessary.

- These overarching provisions are basic cross-cutting clauses under which individual obligations clauses are aligned, whereas measures under each individual obligation are put in place, whether mandatory or not (following the results of negotiation). They function as foundational clauses to which all respective obligations are closely attached.
- What policies each party should take depends on national circumstances of plastic pollution. Each country should tackle the problem through policy mix which are considered to be appropriate. The priority of policies and extent of countermeasures should be decided by each party, taking into account its policy strength and weakness.
- Thus, it is important to have a clear common objective, including a time-bound target that all members can share to tackle plastic pollution (*See page 3*). To attain the concrete target, each member should show a clear policy roadmap and it should be well reflected in its NAPs, which assures parties' actions in a concerted manner.

1. Paragraph 1

- This paragraph provides an obligation for each party to establish a plastic circularity mechanism² in society that will prevent the leakage of plastic into the environment.
- It requires a whole-of-society approach covering all stages of plastic lifecycle by engaging stakeholders such as manufacturers, distributors, retailers, consumers, and waste

¹ See the proposed text of annex X at p. 70.

² This mechanism is established by each country through national strategy, or plan.

management sectors. In order to realize plastic circularity through a whole-of-society approach, it is necessary to establish an effective national system or social mechanism by adopting national policies such as national laws, guidelines or strategies in an integrated and holistic way.

- By promoting plastic circularity, it contributes to creating circular economy and realizing resource efficiency, referred in 3(b) of the UNEA resolution.
- We need to stipulate this basic provision to promote plastic circularity and prevent the leakage of plastics into the environment in each country, according to national circumstances.

2. Paragraph 2

- Under UNEA resolution 5/14, we are committed to tackle plastic pollution covering all lifecycle of plastic. There is a need to clarify necessary measures taken at each stage of plastic lifecycle.
- Therefore, this paragraph obliges each party to take necessary measures covering full lifecycle of plastics by categorizing upstream, middle-stream, and downstream sectors (more specifically, production, distribution, sales, consumption, and waste management sectors) to promote plastic circularity and prevent the leakage.
- It also requires strengthening measures over time to achieve the objective of the instrument.

3. Paragraph 3

- Concrete effective measures at each lifecycle stage should be listed and visualized so that they are appropriately reflected in NAPs.
- Listed measures in Annex X will include the ones provided for in individual obligations as the result of negotiation. Regardless of the individual obligations, other measures considered to be effective will be also included in Annex X.
- It can help each country make reference to the listed measures when it considers the content of NAPs and it can give Parties a right direction of their policies to cope with plastic pollution.
- The list of the effective measures in Annex should be updated by COP according to technical development and technological innovations. (Next section follows this page.)

2. Objective

Option 1

1. The objective of this *instrument** is to end plastic pollution, including in the marine environment [and other aquatic as well as terrestrial ecosystems], [based on a comprehensive approach that addresses the full life cycle of plastic] [through the prevention, progressive reduction and elimination of [additional] plastic pollution] [by 2040] [and enhanced efforts thereafter], [in order] to protect human health and the environment [from its adverse effects] [and to achieve sustainable development].

- We heard some delegations' view that a time bound target should not be in the objective so far. However, without a clear direction towards a common ambition for 2040, there will be no alignment of each country's efforts to prevent plastic pollution, and this will undermine the collective effort by each country.
- By sharing a common ambition for 2040, it will be possible for each country to take concerted action, and the progress of each country's efforts can be reliably evaluated through national action plans. This is why we need a common ambition.
- Furthermore, by stipulating “enhanced efforts thereafter (after 2040)”, further efforts by Parties toward ending plastic pollution will be guaranteed without limiting the lifetime of the treaty.
- The idea of “elimination of additional plastic pollution” is shared by more than 80 countries or regions and is especially known as Osaka Blue Ocean Vision at G20 Osaka summit in 2019.
- Japan believes that it is most reliable and feasible approach to consider a certain time-bound goal for the objective of the instrument by building on this widely shared vision, taking into account of the urgent need to resolve this global issue.
- That is why we propose setting a time-bound target for “elimination of additional plastic pollution by 2040 and enhanced efforts thereafter” here, based on the shared vision.

Annex [X] - Effective measures at each stage of plastic lifecycle³

1. Entire stage

- a. Establish an effective mechanism in society to promote plastic circularity and prevent leakage of plastics to the environment, including marine environment through a whole-of -society approach by adopting integrated and holistic national policies (*)

2. Production stage

- a. Reduce plastic use out of the loop of plastic circularity, including but not limited to the following elements:
 - i. Promote plastic circularity through a whole-of-society approach (*)
 - ii. Proper treatment of chemicals and polymers of concern, and problematic avoidable plastic products, including intentionally added microplastics (*)
 - iii. Reduce single-use plastics (*)
 - iv. Adopt and enhance sustainable product design and performance criteria, by production improvement such as volume reduction, simplification of packaging, ensure long life of plastics, reuse of parts, use of mono materials, making it easier to break apart, sort out, and transport for ease of recycling (*)
 - v. Develop and encourage use of sustainable non-plastic substitutes (*)
 - vi. Establish and operate extended producer responsibility systems
 - vii. Prevent the emissions and releases of plastics throughout its life cycle (*)
- b. Collect and recycle used plastics by production sectors (promotion of reuse and recycling, improvement of reuse and recycling rate of plastics) (*)
- c. Promote evaluation of plastic product footprints on the environment, sharing information on product materials, cooperation between stakeholders, and standardization of product design and development of relevant guidelines.

3. Distribution/sale/consumption stage

- a. Reduce single-use plastics (*)
 - b. Collect and recycle used plastics by distribution/sale/consumption sectors (promotion of reuse and recycling, improvement of reuse and recycling rate of plastics) (*)
 - c. Introduction of product take-back and right-to-repair requirement
 - d. Introduction of product and service delivery systems
 - e. Introduction of deposit refund scheme
 - f. Supporting the development of skills and infrastructure for reuse, recycling, repair, repurposing and refurbishment of plastic products
 - g. Economic instruments such as fees, tax incentives, subsidies, and subsidy reform, as appropriate
 - h. Leveraging public procurement
- Raising-awareness of the problem of global plastic pollution and the importance of consumers' and vendors' behavioral changes in plastic use (*)

4. Waste management and disposal stage

- a. Develop national sound waste management policies based on the appropriate priorities of waste management including waste prevention
- b. Ensure safe and environmentally sound waste management at its different stages, including handling, sorting, collection, transportation, storage, recycling, and final disposal of plastic waste (*)
- c. Enhance recycling and treatment capacity in light of current consumption level and future projections to ensure environmentally sound waste management (*)
- d. Prevent open dumping, ocean dumping, littering and open burning (*)
- e. Invest in waste management systems and infrastructure (*)
- f. Incentivize behavioural changes throughout the value chain and raise consumer awareness on sustainable consumption (*)

5. Cross-cutting elements

- a. Existing plastic pollution, including in the marine environment
 - i. cooperate to assess, identify and prioritize accumulation zones, hotspots and sectors (*)
 - ii. take effective mitigation and remediation measures, including clean-up activities (*)
 - iii. promote engagement for the local population and citizens in safe and environmentally sound remediation activities (*)
- b. Just transition
- c. International and, as appropriate, regional cooperation (*)
- d. Information exchange (*)
- e. Awareness-raising, education and research (*)
- f. Stakeholder engagement (*)
- g. other effective measures that can be adopted by the Conference of Parties taking into account technological development, and scientific and socioeconomic assessments (*)

(*): *mandatory measures*

(Attachment follows this page.)

(Attachment 2)

Explanatory note by Japan; Financial assistance to tackle plastic pollution

1. As for financial assistance for tackling plastic pollution, Japan believes that financial assistance should be a complementary cooperative measure, since, in principle, it is each Member's responsibility to take necessary measures to control the leakage of plastic waste in its country.
2. We also believe that, as each Member's financial resources are limited, necessary financial assistance should be provided to countries most in need, in an effective, cost-efficient and sustainable manner. Moreover, In order to maximize positive effects of financing assistance, Member countries need to identify in advance which actions and measures are most effective and cost-efficient with financing and implement them in a planned way while targeting assistance to necessary areas.
3. With this basic idea, our views on financial support are reflected in the revised draft text as follows;

Part III 1. Financing [mechanism [and resources]]

OP4 ter. The support provided in paragraphs 2 and 4 shall be targeted to most effective and cost-efficient measures, which are well-planned in advance within local communities and coordinated with regional, subregional or national arrangement to maximize positive effects for preventing emissions and releases of plastics. A priority of the support shall be given to establish an effective social system at local level for handling, sorting, collection, transportation, storage, recycling and treatment of plastic wastes, which is indispensable to safe and environmentally sound waste management.

4. Here, we would like to explain the background of our proposal by demonstrating how we should tackle plastic waste management effectively, based on our experience.
5. Japan has proactively contributed to providing assistance to developing countries in the area of waste management. Based on our long experience in this field, we have learned that sound waste management is imperative for reducing the discharge of plastics into the environment and that an effective waste management should be established in three incremental stages as indicated below, based on the country's development stage.

(a) The first stage is to establish a basic social system where scattered wastes

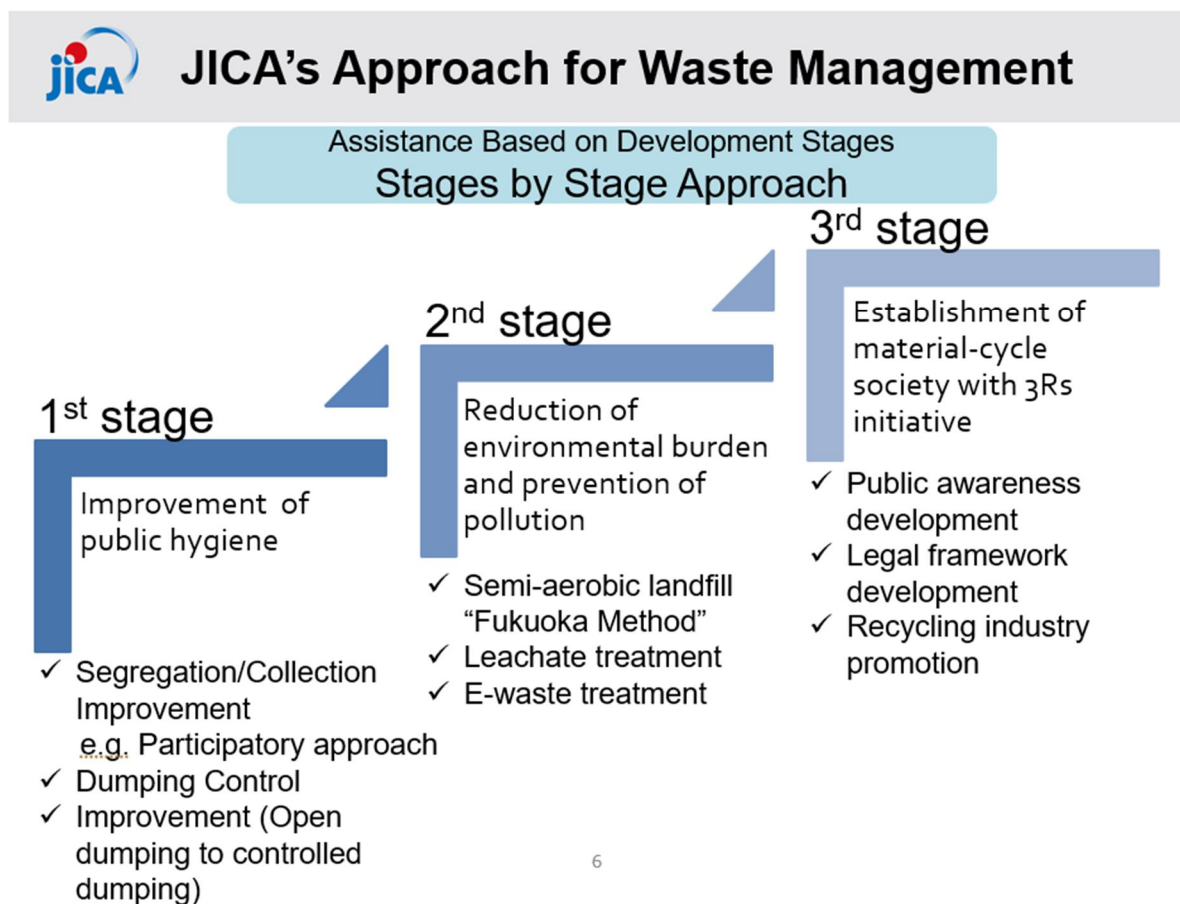
are sorted, collected and transported with the participation of local community and its citizens. The most essential part in this stage is awareness of the current situation of waste management and establishment of an appropriate waste management treatment flow, which contributes to an improvement in basic waste management system and public hygiene.

- (b) The second stage is to build treatment infrastructure along with formulating plans, strengthening legal systems, and introducing technology and equipment for waste reduction aimed at minimizing the adverse impacts on the environment caused by wastes. It contributes to reduction of environmental burden and prevention of pollution.
 - (c) The third stage is to realize 3Rs -Reduce, reuse, recycle for the purpose of establishing a sound material-cycle society. The value added through reuse and recycling of wastes is a drive for industrialization. Sustainable industrialization requires investment by private sector particularly in reuse, recycling, use of alternatives, and advanced sorting. However, without a basic waste collection system in the first stage, which is fundamental for development of sustainable reuse and recycling, private sectors would face investment risks due to lack of continuous availability of plastic wastes.
(In the case of GBFF (Global Biodiversity Framework Fund), it has yet to secure fund from private sector, which clearly shows that some beneficial elements linked with industrial developments are necessary to promote stable investments by private companies.)
6. Therefore, a priority of supports should be given, first and foremost, to establishing a basic social system at the local level for handling, sorting, collection, transportation, storage, recycling and treatment of plastic wastes, which is indispensable to safe and environmentally sound waste management and the key to industrialization for promoting private sector's investment. With a participatory approach, it serves to keep necessary costs down for waste management and make the social system more sustainable.
 7. Plus, in order to ensure that supports are targeted to most effective and cost-efficient measures for waste management, each country must do careful planning to establish a waste management system at the local level and coordinate it with regional, subregional or national arrangement to build necessary waste treatment facilities covering geographically large areas in an effective and cost-efficient way. This coherent planning at local community and wide-ranging coordination are essential to maximize positive effects for preventing emissions and releases of

plastics.

8. With these ideas above, Japan has greatly contributed so far to assisting many developing countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, etc. in resolving their waste management issue and we can assure our effectiveness of its assistance method which works properly depending on national developmental stage.
9. Japan would like to share this vision on financing clauses for the plastic treaty with other countries and further consider the best way to realize an effective and cost-effective plastic waste management system.

Annex: Japan's assistance approach for waste management



(end)