

Statement by Masaaki Nakagawa
At the Habitat III Open-ended Informal Consultative Meetings
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At the outset, on behalf of the people of Japan, allow me to express our deepest gratitude for the outpouring of support and condolences from around the world to the victims of the recent earthquake in Kumamoto. I would also like convey the profound sympathy and solidarity of the people of Japan for the people of Ecuador who have also suffered a devastating earthquake this month.

To begin, I would like to congratulate the bureau countries, the secretariat and all the many others on the progress they have made in preparatory process for HABITAT III, and to thank them for their tireless efforts.

In order to engage in a constructive discussion towards Habitat III, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce the five major points that we believe will contribute to the New Urban Agenda.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Human Security

First, as a fundamental understanding for the discussion, the New Urban Agenda must have a policy-consistency with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The 2030 Agenda takes a people-centered as well as comprehensive and integrated approach to development. We strongly support this approach because it is well aligned with the concept of human security, one of Japan's most essential diplomatic policies and international cooperation. We consider it is indispensable for the New Urban Agenda to be explicitly aligned with the goals and approach of the 2030 Agenda.

Resilience to natural disasters through the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction

Second, Japan considers that the New Urban Agenda should promote the policy of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which was adopted last year as a guideline for actions that the world needs to take over the next 15 years to address this issue. As the recent earthquakes in Japan and Ecuador should remind us, preparedness and resilience to natural disasters are absolutely indispensable in both protecting lives and preserving the hard won achievements of development from destruction. It is thus critical to appropriately promote Disaster Risk Reduction including raising awareness of disasters, such as Tsunami, as the UN designated 5th of November as Tsunami awareness day. Therefore, the Disaster Risk Reduction, the major factor of achieving SDGs Goal 11, should be clearly stated in the NUA.

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National and Regional Strategy

Third, from our experience of rapid urbanization and economic growth, inclusive, sustainable and resilient urban growth cannot be achieved by city-level policy and strategic planning alone; rather it also requires national and regional level planning. For example, in order to cope with the challenges of rapid urbanization caused by influxes of domestic migration from rural to urban areas, countries need national urban policies which include both national and regional level strategies. From this point of view, a balance territorial development is a keyword to achieve sustainable urban growth and thus clearly stated in the New Urban Agenda as a basic concept of National Urban Policy with the international guidelines of urban and territorial planning made by UN Habitat.

Quality Infrastructure Investment

Fourth is that 'Quality Infrastructure Investment' is essential in promoting strong, sustainable, balanced growth. 'Quality infrastructure' ensures reliable operation, low life-cycle cost, safety and resilience, which leads to economic efficiency and securing people's safety; based on these characteristics it will contribute to the achievement of the SDGs, especially Goals 9 and 11.

Cities and the Environment

Finally, as recognized in the process of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, cities have various dynamic implementation measures for environmental protection policies including climate change and waste management, and have implemented them. Japan hopes that the New Urban Agenda will strengthen and encourage those roles of cities.

We hope all these issues will be fully discussed and specified in the New Urban Agenda. I would also like to reiterate that Japan is committed to continuing to contribute actively and positively to the preparatory discussions toward Habitat III.

Thank you for your attention.