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Country/Organization: Japan

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Agenda Item No: 9

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Remarks by H.E. Mr. Koichiro Kakee
Assistant Vice-Minister for International Affairs, the Ministry of
Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Japan
3rd Session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport, UNESCAP

1. Opening

● Honorable Ministers, heads of delegations, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon. I'm Koichiro Kakee, Assistant Vice-Minister of International Affairs, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism, Japan. It is my great honor and pleasure to participate in the 3rd Session of the Ministerial Conference on Transport of the ESCAP on behalf of our Minister, Mr. Keiichi ISHI. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Russian Federation for their warm welcome. My gratitude also goes to the Secretariat of the ESCAP who made all the necessary preparations for this Conference.

● I would like to state three points to which we, Japan, intend to especially make efforts and contribute to the ESCAP activities based on the Regional action program for sustainable transport connectivity in Asia and the Pacific, Phase I to be adopted in this Conference.

2. Regional transport infrastructure connectivity

● Firstly, I refer to regional transport infrastructure connectivity.

● Development of the transport infrastructure brings economic and social development in the region by facilitating the movements of people and goods. Accordingly, it is very important from the point of the Sustainable Development Goals. Japan has assisted the transport infrastructure development across the region including the Asian Highway Network through ODA or the like.

● The demand for the transport infrastructure will increase more and more, and therefore the investment responding such huge demand shall be required. In this regard, Prime Minister of Japan announced at the occasion of G7 Ise-Shima Summit held in Japan in May this year an initiative to provide financing of approximately 200 billion US dollars as the target for the next five years towards quality infrastructure investment across the world, including Asia and the Pacific. In addition, Japan reinforced the Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corporation for Transport and Urban Development set up in 2014 to fund
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overseas transport infrastructure projects.

- For the sustainable growth, not only the quantity of infrastructure investment but also the quality of infrastructure investment is important. In particular, qualitative elements such as (1) economic efficiency in view of life-cycle cost, (2) safety and resilience against natural disasters, (3) job creation, capacity building and transferring expertise and know-how, (4) addressing social and environmental impacts, and (5) alignment with economic and development strategies, are important.

- Let me explain some elements of quality infrastructure, taking the example of Shinkansen or High Speed Rail in Japan. Japanese Shinkansen is the system with the quite high level of safety, which experienced no fatal accident for more than 50 years since it commenced commercial operation in 1964. Its resilience against the natural disasters was proved during the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011. The Shinkansen operated in the Tohoku region at that time automatically reduced its speed and stopped, by its Earthquake Quick Alarm System (EQAS) before the vibration came, and as a result no passenger was injured.

- I would like to share with you our experience on development of quality infrastructure.

3. Sustainable urban transport

- Secondly, I would like to touch upon the issue of sustainable urban transport.

- Modal share in cities in Japan shows that the share of public transport, especially the share of railways, is high. In case of central Tokyo, the share of railways is as high as 50% compared to 10% of private cars. Such higher use of railways contributes to making transport more sustainable in terms of CO2 emissions from the transport sector, air pollution, traffic accidents and traffic congestion.

- Such high use of railways is supported by the high level of their user-friendliness such as the dense network of rails/subways, their on-time operation, and a rechargeable smart card which can
be used for any public transportation regardless of modes or operators. In addition, high level of the safety provided by the proper maintenance, introduction of ATS (Automatic Train Stop) and so on, and high level of the security which is demonstrated by many passengers falling asleep on the train, also contribute the high share of the railway use.

● Through the activities of the ESCAP, we will provide our expertise on sustainable urban transport.

4. Improving road safety

● Finally, I would like to state on road safety. In Japan, due to the motorization caused by the rapid economic growth, the annual fatalities from traffic accidents exceeded 16,000 in 1970 and this was considered as a very serious social problem. Comprehensive and continuous measures on safer roads, safer drivers and safer cars have implemented since then, and as a result, we successfully reduced the number of fatalities to approximately 4000 in 2015 and this is just a quarter of its peak. At present, we are aiming at further reduction and our present target is less than 2500 by 2019.

● I believe that our success in the past will certainly useful for many ESCAP countries in combating growing traffic accidents due to rapid motorization.

5. Closing

● To conclude, we look forward to many opportunities to cooperate with any ESCAP countries in implementing the regional action program for sustainable transport connectivity in the future. Thank you for your kind attention.