

Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya
at the International High Level Forum on NUTEC Plastics

Firstly, I would like to welcome the convening of this International High Level Forum and express my great honor to participate on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Marine plastic pollution stands out as one of the most critical environmental issues facing the world today. Solving this problem presents several significant challenges: firstly, the establishment of scientific knowledge and harmonization of monitoring methods to accurately grasp the extent of pollution; secondly, the urgent need for effective recycling and reuse of plastics as a resource; and thirdly, the imperative to build an effective international framework through global cooperation.

In addressing these challenges, this High-Level Forum offers a critically important opportunity to advance innovative recycling technologies utilizing nuclear science, strengthen international monitoring cooperation, and foster multilateral discussions.

Japan attaches great importance to nuclear science and technology that contributes to resolving global challenges, including achieving the SDGs, and thus has enhanced international cooperation in this regard.

Specifically, to tackle the aforementioned challenges in marine plastic pollution, Japan has been making various significant contributions.

Firstly, Japan highly commends the NUTEC Plastics initiative, spearheaded by Director General Grossi, and has strongly supported it since its very inception. To date, Japan has contributed approximately 1.3 million Euros to the IAEA, supporting related Technical Cooperation and Coordinated Research Projects on NUTEC Plastics. For instance, we have supported the development of irradiation-based plastic recycling technologies, with a view to future societal implementation, in four pilot countries, namely, the Philippines, hosting of this event, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand. I understand that the Philippines is researching to utilize these recycled materials for housing construction. This is a truly remarkable initiative, that makes effective utilization of resources while addressing pressing

environmental concerns. We wish to convey our highest respect for this effort, and we are honored that Japan has been able to play a part in this important endeavor. In addition, Japan has supported the provision of equipment and human resource development for marine environmental monitoring related to plastic pollution. In this way, Japan contributes to NUTEC Plastics in both upstream and downstream aspects.

Beyond NUTEC Plastics, Japan has also taken a leadership role in broader international cooperation efforts towards marine plastic issues. This includes proposing the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision," which aims to reduce additional marine plastic litter to zero by 2050, and actively participating in the ongoing negotiations for the Global Plastics Treaty. At the resumed Fifth Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC5.2) held in Geneva this past August, Japan actively worked to facilitate substantive discussions, including leading informal consultations on key provisions of the treaty. , as efforts to resume negotiations are currently underway, Japan intends to actively contribute to discussions, aiming for an early conclusion of negotiations to establish an effective framework that includes major plastic-consuming and emitting countries.

Furthermore, aiming to establish a scientific foundation for addressing plastic pollution, Japan has been engaged in international cooperation initiatives with numerous experts, including the IAEA, to harmonize monitoring methods and develop enhanced data management systems. As one of its outcomes, in May of last year, Japan released the "Atlas of Ocean Microplastics," commonly known as AOMI, an open-source database equipped with mapping function. Japan has been also providing a training program for monitoring of plastic in the environment targeting ASEAN countries.

In conclusion, the advancement and dissemination of marine monitoring and recycling technologies are crucial for effectively advancing measures against marine plastic pollution, including the implementation of a future treaty. Japan will work towards a sustainable solution to this critical issue in close cooperation with the IAEA as well as its partner organizations, while making best use of our expertise in recycling and nuclear science and technology.

Thank you for your kind attention.