

**Speech by H.E. Ms. Yoko Kamikawa,  
Special Envoy of Prime Minister of Japan**

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**Plenary Session**

**1  
of  
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3:00 p.m. – X:00 p.m. on 23rd (P)

10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. on 24th (P)

● Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
it is a great honor for me  
to deliver this speech here today,  
on behalf of  
the Government of Japan.

● Do you like drinking tea?

My hometown, Shizuoka

at the foot of Mt. Fuji,

is one of the leading producers

of green tea in the world,

as it is endowed

with rich clean water.

- Water, however,  
has occasionally hit us hard.
  
- In fact,  
heavy rains, some 50 years ago,  
deprived the town  
of many lives, houses and plantations.

- While the citizens were still in deep confusion and despair, they discussed what to do to build back better.

- Reflecting on what had happened in this crisis of too-much-water, they thought-up paths and means that would have prevented the catastrophe.

- And so,  
the people decided  
to create small ponds  
or water storage reservoirs  
in each of their houses,  
to store the rainfall.
- The ponds also helped  
recharge the groundwater  
for green tea.

- In addition,  
the population became  
more attentive to disaster warnings  
and stood prepared  
to take action  
when there were alerts.



- The government responded to the people by building reservoirs, a diversion channel, and pumping stations.

- Last summer,  
Shizuoka was hit by  
another heavy rain episode,  
even greater than  
the one of  
50 years prior.

- Thanks to its preparedness,  
the town suffered  
no casualties.
- The town quickly recovered  
to normalcy,  
serenely surrounded by  
green tea leaves.

- This is a small story of “back casting” from a crisis to identify solutions.

- Each individual  
took stock  
of his or her own catastrophe,  
and devised  
preventive measures.

- The paths or means developed, based on the balance of grey and green infrastructures and the pursuit of dual benefits for nature and people.

- Ladies and gentlemen,
- Human beings  
have now already crossed  
planetary boundaries  
in many areas.

- We are stepping towards catastrophes by accelerating climate change, aggravating the quality of water, and drastically reducing biodiversity.



- The Earth  
looks like our town  
of 50 years ago.
- The remedial paths for the Earth  
are logically  
no different from  
that of a small town.

- Breaking points  
should be anticipated;  
means and paths  
to prevent or avoid them  
are to be combined,  
and the integrated measures  
implemented,  
step by step.

- This is the only,  
and shortest, route.
  
- The Earth  
and nations are,  
however,  
complicated systems.

- Numerous data-points  
on the atmosphere,  
hydro-geographics, and oceans  
need to be collected  
and analyzed to identify  
and build pathways  
based on solid scientific findings.

- Nature  
and human needs  
should be balanced  
at different scales.
- And **dual-benefits**  
should be pursued relentlessly  
amid ever-changing  
social and environmental conditions.

- All stakeholders should share information, recognize potential crises, and avoid catastrophes.

- I understand  
that this is the meaning  
of “Early warning for all”  
called for  
by Secretary-General Mr. Guterres.

- The world should unite  
and act  
towards this aim.
- Japan will act  
to make this happen  
through  
water transformation.



- The Government of Japan  
will contribute  
half a trillion Japanese Yen  
or approximately 3.8 billion US Dollars  
for this purpose.

- We have named it the “Kumamoto Initiative for Water”, after the host city of the 4th Asia-Pacific Water Summit.

- Japan intends  
to further expand the size  
and contents of this Initiative  
through partnerships  
with various countries,  
regional development banks,  
and international organizations  
including UN.

- Within the Initiative,  
a focus  
will be given to projects  
that simultaneously pursue  
both  
climate change mitigation  
and adaptation.

- For example,  
water facilities that are operated  
using super-accurate  
hydro-climatological predictions  
will drastically reduce water loss  
and, hence,  
yield much more energy  
and food.

- Billions will be gained by investing mere millions.
- In addition, excessive greenhouse gas emissions are thus to be curtailed, and threats to ecosystems to be removed.

- Japan will also promote R&D and capacity building on the revolutionary use of satellite data, as well as promote the building of Quality Infrastructure for water supply and sewage treatment.

● Priorities

will be given to LDCs

and Small Island Developing States,

women and children,

youth and seniors,

people with disabilities,

and indigenous peoples.



- Water related to the **Poles**,  
**cryosphere**,  
and **groundwater**  
will likewise be considered  
within the water cycle  
from source to sea.

- Lastly but not the least,  
I would like to conclude by stating  
that Japan will also  
actively collaborate with countries  
and international organizations  
that share  
these common goals  
with us.

- Japan will contribute  
to restoring and keeping  
a sound water cycle  
by sharing the knowledge  
and experience  
of Japan  
and other countries.

- In closing,  
I sincerely do hope  
that all internationally agreed  
goals and targets  
related to water  
are met by 2030.

- I look forward to toasting to this achievement with you with a cup of Japanese green tea.
- Thank you.

(803 words)