

Statement by Hiroshi Minami, Deputy Director General for Global Issues of the Foreign Ministry, on Promoting Equality, including Social Equity, Gender Equity, Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, at the 8th session of SDGs-OWG

Since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, many developing countries have achieved remarkable economic growth to reduce the number of the poor people. But still there are 1.2 billion poor people in the world, and more than 70 per cent of them are in middle income countries. We are aware that there is diversification among the regions and sectors, and the benefits of development have not been shared equally. Rather, inequality within countries is growing to be a serious concern for all of us, as stated by Professor Ocampo yesterday. If we aim to eradicate poverty, we have to address inequality within countries, especially in middle income countries. If we leave inequality without doing anything to redress this issue, growing inequality will destabilize the society, and accordingly the fruit of the development will be lost. We strongly believe that the SDGs should aim for economic inclusiveness.

In order to achieve equity and inclusive growth, a transformative shift of the High Level Panel report, leaving no one behind, is essential, and we believe that this transformative shift has common values with the notion of human security. We should put the people at the centre, and we have to think how to protect and empower them. From this perspective, we believe that the discussion should take into account the viewpoints from the vulnerable in the society, including the disabled people.

Gender equality and empowerment of women are essential elements for sustainable development and also human security. As indicated at yesterday's panel discussion, still gender inequality is a serious issue and we have to address this issue in the deliberation of SDGs. Especially, from the viewpoint to protect women, freedom from violence is a critical issue, and of course the empowerment of women to unleash the capability of women is also important. On the other hand, women are essential participants in the society, and the participation in the decision making by women will have significant effects on the achievements of development goals. Japan has been promoting mainstreaming of gender equality as a cross cutting issue. We support the

suggestions to have a stand alone goal on gender equality and women's empowerment, and to mainstream gender into other goals through appropriate targets.