

**Statement by Mr. Jun Yanagi, Deputy Chief of Mission,
Embassy of Japan in Vietnam,
on the occasion of the Hanoi Conference on Illegal Wildlife
Trade**

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of Vietnam for hosting this Conference. Participation of delegates from all over the world attests to the importance of fight against illegal wildlife trade and growing interest of the international community in this issue.

Recent increase in poaching and illegal trade in wildlife remains to be our grave concern. Such activities not only threaten nature conservation but also have severe security implications in the light of its possible connections with transnational criminal networks.

Under these circumstances, Japan has participated in the International Conference on the Illegal Wildlife Trade since its first meeting in London in 2014 and joined the London Declaration and Kasane Statement which are aimed at “Eradicating the market for illegal wildlife products” and “Strengthening law enforcement” among others.

Mr. Chairman,

The issue of poaching and illegal wildlife trade cannot be addressed effectively only by individual states’ efforts. From such a standpoint, Japan has always been active in international frameworks such as CITES, having supported MIKE (Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants) program, and also assisted developing countries in the preparation of relevant national legislation for the past several years. This year, we made 60,000 US dollars contribution to the CITES Secretariat to support a project for establishment of a strategic anti-poaching operations centre in the World Heritage Site in Zimbabwe.

At the United Nations, Japan has renewed its commitment in tackling illicit

trafficking in wildlife by co-sponsoring the General Assembly resolutions on this issue in 2015 and this year.

Japan is the largest contributor to the Global Environment Facility at its Sixth Replenishment period which became effective in July 2014. Out of this replenishment, more than 130 million US dollars are dedicated to World Bank-led “Global Partnership on Wildlife Conservation and Crime Prevention for Sustainable Development” program, with expected co-finance of up to 700 million US dollars by other entities.

Significance of efforts at home should also be stressed. Japan has taken the opportunity of World Wildlife Day on March 3 for awareness raising activities. The Government, together with an NGO and e-commerce companies, has annually held a panel exhibition to disseminate information on rules concerning the trade in endangered species. Goods seized at the Customs were also displayed.

Furthermore, Japan amended its domestic law, and strengthened the penalties for illegal imports and exports and for illegal domestic trade in designated endangered species in 2013, and Japan endeavors to strengthen the implementation of the law.

With regard to ivory trade, a “Public-Private Council for the Promotion of Appropriate Ivory Trade Measures”, comprising relevant ministries and agencies, business associations of ivory-related industry, private companies engaged in e-commerce, environmental NGO and experts, was established in May this year. Discussion was made on further measures to be taken for promoting appropriate ivory trade, so as to continuously secure Japan’s NOT contributing to poaching of elephants and illegal ivory trade thereof. The Council published a report in September 2016 as to what Japan can do more to reinforce the existing system for ivory trade control.

Mr. Chairman,

I sincerely hope that the discussions at this Conference will be fruitful in helping keeping the momentum in addressing this urgent issue of illegal wildlife trade. Japan reiterates its determination to deal with this challenge continuously in close cooperation with the international community.

Thank you very much for your attention.