

Statement by Hiroshi Minami, Deputy Director General for Global Issues of the Foreign Ministry of Japan, at the seventh session of SDGs-OWG, on Sustainable Cities, Human Settlements and Sustainable Transport

On Sustainable cities and human settlements, as we all know now half of the world population lives in the urban area, and the urban population will reach at 70 per cent of the world population in 2050.

Cities are driving forces for growth and center of creativity and innovation but urbanization has the complexity of the problems. The problems will be poverty, inequality between the rich and the poor, gender, slum dwelling, basic services, transport, crime and safety, waste management and greenhouse gas emission. In addition, many megacities are situated in the coastal area and they have high risk of exposure to climate change and natural disasters. Resilience is another important element to be considered.

These problems are interconnected with each other, and it is imperative to address these problems for sustainable development and poverty eradication. We believe that the way to tackle the problems in relation to urbanization should have holistic approach.

The question is whether SDGs should have a stand alone goal for sustainable cities or not, and my country is open to the question although my country puts much emphasis on the issue of sustainable cities. We should consider what is the best way to address the problems of urbanization.

In the consideration of the targets for cities, we have to involve the local governments so that we can extract experience and knowledge from them and give them ownership of the targets. Further, of course we need the involvement of, knowledge sharing among and networking with not only the local governments but also other stakeholders, including private sector, and civil society.

Just for your information, today lunchtime, Japan and France held a side event titled sustainable future cities we want in collaboration with other international organizations. We believe that there were rich and lively discussions, and the summary will be available in due course.

On Transport, transport will have an important role for sustainable development

and poverty eradication. I would like to commend the secretariat for its work to have produced TST Issue Brief on this issue. I think that focusing on the four key areas, access to integrated urban transport systems and improved rural road, urban air quality, road safety, and energy and climate, is a sensible approach. I am not convinced of the necessity to have a stand alone goal for transport, and these suggested areas should be duly reflected into the associated targets for thematic areas.