

I would like to thank the co-facilitators, the Irish and Qatari Ambassadors, for hosting this first informal consultation on the political declaration to be adopted at the SDG Summit in this September.

Since COVID-19 and other emergent crises have delayed or derailed many efforts to achieve the SDGs, the political declaration should be a strong, straightforward, and action-oriented message that looks ahead to the Summit of the Future next year, the next SDG Summit in 2027 as the deadline of the 2030 Agenda in seven years, and beyond. It should also be complementary to the outcome document of the Summit of the Future (“A Pact for the Future”).

Solidarity and trust among people, underpinned by the agency of individuals to act independently and make their own free choices, are essential to realizing human security in the new era and achieving the SDGs, as pointed out by the UNDP special report last February, which should be instrumental in aiming for a society where no one is left behind. In order to ensure human security in the new era, we must enhance the resilience of individuals, communities, and nations by investing in and empowering people through education, so that they can better cope with and find solutions to the changes and challenges specific to our times.

From this perspective, the Transforming Education Summit (TES) held last September was very timely, and its outcomes were the result of the efforts of many Member States who understand that education is an enabler for all other SDGs. We need to continue promoting the education agenda towards the SDG Summit this year.

Moreover, there are several upcoming events this year which are opportunities to make valuable contributions to the SDG Summit. These include the UN 2023 Water Conference next month, the High-Level Meeting of the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework in May, and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July. In addition, we should make the best use of the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage in September, as well as the High-Level Meetings on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPR), and Tuberculosis, in order to achieve more resilient and equitable universal health coverage (UHC) and to promote concrete efforts to fight against future pandemics based on the lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, we are facing the need for profound social transformation in the future, with a new historical era in sight. To this end, it is becoming vital for governments, businesses, civil society, academia, and other entities to set their own goals and accelerate efforts to achieve the SDGs over the "second half of 15 years".

The Government of Japan is currently revising its Development Cooperation Charter in order to further promote the achievement of the SDGs. The revised Charter will be announced in the first half of this year and will set the course of Japan's development cooperation for the next 10 years. Japan will also work with the international community through the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai to create a sustainable society in which each and every one of us can realize his or her full potential.

In closing, I would like to reiterate Japan's commitment to contribute constructively to this process. We will collaborate closely with the co-facilitators and our fellow Member States to this end.

I thank you.