COP31 Ministerial Statement by SASAKAWA Hiroyoshi,

Minister of the Environment, Japan (November 17, 2026)

(Introduction)

Thank you, Mr. President. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Republic of Türkiye and Australia for their efforts leading up to and here at COP31.

(Adaptation)

Excellencies, this year, once again, natural disasters have struck many parts of the world, such as heatwaves across Europe and other regions, landslides in Nepal, and wildfires in Indonesia and Canada. The possible influence of climate change on these kinds of events has been highlighted. Japan has also experienced the impacts of climate change, with record-breaking heat and heavy rainfall in recent years, and serious consequences for people's lives and livelihoods. Climate change is an urgent challenge facing all of humanity.

Climate resilience is a priority for every country. Japan has, therefore, supported a wide range of adaptation measures across the Asia-Pacific region,

including disaster risk reduction, capacity building, and the development of National Adaptation Plans. In particular, we need to rapidly deploy Early Warning Systems to protect lives and property from disasters that could occur at any moment.

Against this backdrop, and after the “EWS Public-Private Partnership Initiative,” which Japan established at COP27 as one of its adaptation initiatives, Japan is launching the “Network for EWS in the Asia-Pacific Region”, or NEWS for short. Through this network, we will share knowledge and expertise on the introduction and operation of Early Warning Systems across the Asia-Pacific region and promote the effective deployment.

(The 1.5 Degree Goal and the Implementation COP)

Mr. President, mitigation is fundamental to halting the worsening impacts of climate change. I would like to emphasize the importance of accelerating global decarbonization efforts based on multilateralism, in order to limit the magnitude and duration of any overshoot and maintain the Paris Agreement’s 1.5 degree goal.

We should agree to continue the MWP, the only agenda item on mitigation, beyond this year and secure a forum for discussions on further scaling-up ambition and implementation.

This year's COP is an "Implementation COP." Japan strongly supports this theme and will make every effort to contribute to its success.

(Domestic Mitigation Measures)

Japan has set the unwavering goal of achieving net zero by 2050. Under our ambitious NDC, aligned with the 1.5 degree goal, we are steadily reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while also advancing blue carbon initiatives, the sustainable and cyclic use of forest resources, and the expansion of wood use.

To achieve net zero by 2050, energy security, and economic growth simultaneously, Japan is advancing a green transformation (GX) by harnessing Japan's technological capabilities.

Japan has been advancing efforts across society toward "Zero Waste," which stands at the forefront of the Presidency's Action Agenda. Including through

policies and technologies for reducing food loss and waste, recycling plastic bottles, and waste-to-energy, we will simultaneously advance waste reduction and decarbonization. We will also promote resource circulation through the recycling of critical minerals that are essential for decarbonization technologies.

(International Cooperation)

As part of Japan's contribution to global climate action, we will promote comprehensive cooperation across Asia, including AZEC partner countries through the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC), which aims to advance decarbonization, energy security, and economic growth simultaneously.

Under the Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM),Internationally Transferred Mitigation Outcomes (ITMOs) have been issued between Japan and Thailand, the Maldives, Palau, and Mongolia since 2025, in line with Article 6 of the Paris Agreement. The JCM promotes investment in decarbonization and contributes to sustainable development, including the achievement of the NDCs of both Japan and its partner countries. We will continue to bring together the strengths of the public and private sectors and work with our 32

partner countries to achieve international emission reductions and removals through JCM projects.

The buildings sector accounts for nearly 40 percent of global CO2 emissions, making it imperative to reduce emissions throughout the entire life cycle of buildings. Cooling demand, in particular, is projected to increase substantially. We therefore need to globally promote highly energy-efficient air-conditioning technologies combined with passive cooling technologies, the transition from fluorocarbon refrigerants with high global warming potential to natural refrigerants, and the circular use of refrigerants.

To discuss solutions to these challenges, Japan will host two assemblies of UNEP-led initiatives in 2028: an annual assembly for GlobalABC, aimed at improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the buildings sector, and an assembly for the Global Cooling Pledge, launched at COP28 to advance sustainable cooling. Japan will contribute through solutions including energy-efficient and decarbonization technologies for buildings, highly energy-efficient air conditioners and other heat pump technologies, as well as refrigerant management.

On regenerative agriculture, Japan will illustrate a concept that takes into account the climatic conditions and the characteristics of paddy field agriculture in the Asian monsoon region. At the same time, we will promote the international deployment of Japan's GX technologies in the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sectors, thereby helping to mobilize GX investment in agriculture and food systems and contribute to global food security.

(Climate Finance)

As such, in implementing climate action, Japan remains committed to supporting countries and providing climate finance through various channels under the Paris Agreement. At the same time, to meet the needs of countries requiring support, it is essential to broaden the contributor base to include countries capable of contributing as well as developed countries, and to expand various financial flows, including private finance. In particular, it is important to maximize the impact of limited public resources by using them effectively to mobilize private investment and achieve greater impact.

Alongside increasing the overall volume of finance, we must also improve

access to finance and its effectiveness so that SIDS and LDCs, which are particularly vulnerable to climate change, can reliably access the finance they need. This includes strengthening national capacities and institutional frameworks.

(Cycle of Ratchet-up Ambition under the Paris Agreement: NDCs, BTRs and the GST)

Mr. President, at this "Implementation COP," we must reaffirm the importance of keeping the cycle of ratchet-up ambition under the Paris Agreement in motion: all Parties submit NDCs reflecting their highest possible ambition as early as possible, steadily reduce emissions, report on implementation through their BTRs, assess progress towards the 1.5 degree goal through the GST, and reflect the outcomes of the GST in their subsequent NDCs.

The process for GST2, which outcome will be considered at COP33 in 2028, will begin. To ensure a robust assessment of global progress, it is essential that all Parties submit their NDCs and BTRs.

Japan will submit its BTR2 this month. We encourage all Parties to submit their BTRs by the end of this year.

At the same time, the NDCs that were due last year have so far been submitted by only around 150 Parties. We urge those Parties that have yet to do so to communicate their NDCs reflecting their highest possible ambition as early as possible.

In the GST2, it will be important to conduct an assessment based on the best available science and send a strong message to the global society toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement. Japan has contributed both to generating scientific findings on climate change and to the preparation of the IPCC's Seventh Assessment Report (AR7). It is essential that the latest scientific findings, including those of the IPCC, be duly taken into account.

Last month, Japan established the Japan Greenhouse Gas Center. It will bring together the observation data, research findings, and expertise of Japanese research institutions, serving as a one-stop information hub while generating scientific knowledge that will also contribute to the GST.

Japan and ASEAN Member States have prepared an interim report of Climate Action for Mutual Prosperity Under Regional Cooperation, which we call "CAMPUR". The report, which will be released tomorrow, compiles climate policies and good practices as well as the lessons learned from these efforts that also achieve inclusive economic growth and energy security and address other socioeconomic challenges. We will provide these findings as an input to GST2 from the Japan and ASEAN region which share common energy and socioeconomic challenges.

(Conclusion)

Excellencies, let us work together to ensure the success of this "Implementation COP." Let us continue walking the path of implementation together toward achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement.

Next year, Japan will host GREEN×EXPO 2027 in Yokohama, which will focus on addressing global environmental challenges including decarbonization, as well as demonstrating horticulture and floriculture. I look forward to welcoming many of you to Japan during this EXPO. Thank you

very much.