

International Symposium on the Promotion of Deforestation-Free Global Supply Chains for Contributing to Halt Deforestation, Tokyo 23-24 January

Vice Minister Nonaka,

Distinguished representatives of international organizations, states, non-governmental organizations,
Ladies and gentlemen

I would like to thank the Japanese Government, and its Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries for organizing this first International Symposium on the Promotion of Deforestation-Free Global Supply Chains for Contributing to Halting Deforestation.

Fighting deforestation is the 21st century's major challenge. It is essential if we are to fulfil the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and the Paris Agreement on the climate change as well as the objectives that we have set in the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Deforestation's impact on the climate is significant since it accounts for approximately 11% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions.

A political mobilization process was started in the context of COP21 in Paris following the New York Declaration on Forests in September 2014, which set out the ambitious target of halving deforestation by 2020 and eliminating it by 2030. The forest is thus mentioned in the Article 5 of the Paris Agreement and the civil society is taking action pursuant to the Action Agenda. This commitment to addressing climate-forest connections is being delivered as shown by actions organized at COP23 in Bonn recently.

Just as fighting for the climate entails protecting tropical forests, we cannot curb the loss of biodiversity on a planetary scale unless we address this issue.

France is concerned in several respects: first of all because we have tropical forests on our territory, in Guyana, and also because our way of living, as a developed country, is one of the factors causing the deforestation seen on our planet.

As you know, more than 70% of the deforestation of tropical forests is caused by the production of a handful of agricultural commodities, namely palm oil, beef, soy and pulp.

According to a study commissioned by the European Commission, Europe is responsible for approximately 7% of imported deforestation.

More and more, in consumer countries, the debate is growing on the social and environmental impacts of the way some agricultural commodities are produced. The questions are the followings:

- First, if sustainable production chains are not promoted, large biodiversity reserves will be increasingly destroyed at a global level and will worsen the living conditions of forest communities;

- Second, on the other hand, if we ban all consumption of this product, all market opportunities for farmers working with sustainability in mind will disappear. This could also lead to the sector focusing on regions where consumers are less politically conscious of such problems.

Therefore, it is essential for consumer countries that are aware of what is at stake to support the sustainability efforts made in the sector of commodities that threaten forests.

This is the avenue we would like to promote, through a constructive, partnership-based approach fully involving the producer countries.

France is highly committed to fighting deforestation:

- France signed the Amsterdam Declarations on eliminating deforestation from agricultural commodity chains. France is chairing the group of the signatory countries for the first half of 2018, and we will convene a multi-stakeholder meeting in June this year;
- As part of the French Government's climate action plan launched in July 2017, France announced a national strategy to fight imported deforestation. It will be presented soon this year.

Deforestation is a complex issue and has many causes. Therefore, we must address this problem from several angles. We need to have better knowledge of the causes of deforestation, commodity flows and actions that have already been conducted in the field, particularly in the private sector. We need to define cooperation mechanisms and implement them, particularly with producer countries and the main emerging consumers. Lastly, we need to take better consideration of deforestation issues in the national policies of all of us.

All of this is imperative to reinforcing progress of sectors and people involved in them.

You can count on France's support and commitment to working with its different partners constructively on these issues.

I welcome the conclusions that will be drawn at this symposium and that we, signatory countries of the Amsterdam Declarations, will find extremely useful. We must pursue these exchanges so that we can move forward together.

I thank you.