

Japan speech at the celebration of the Fiftieth anniversary of the 1958 Agreement
(Thursday, 26 July 2008)

- It is my honor to have the opportunity for this speech in this memorable event, the fiftieth anniversary of the 1958 Agreement.
- Before going to my speech, I would like to inform you that Minister Takase, Permanent Mission of Japan in Geneva, is also here to celebrate this anniversary.

1. Government of Japan's activities conducted so far

- On the back of the internal safety and environmental issues on vehicles, aiming at the promotion of wide use of safe and environmentally friendly vehicles and, accompanying that, the development of automobile industries, Japan has conducted the international harmonization activities of vehicle regulations so far, putting the promotion of the harmonization in one of the important issues within the Government.
- Further more, deeming that the most appropriate place to promote such international harmonization of vehicle regulations was WP29 where automotive experts from countries including European countries gather at one place together and that has a long history and a good deal of knowledge as a place addressing vehicle technical regulations, the Government of Japan has proactively participated in its activities.
- Specifically, since 1977, the Government of Japan had continuously participated in the WP29 in an observer status. At that time, Japan learnt stream of international harmonization activities and amendments to international regulations through the exchange of views and information with participating countries. Then, in 1987, Japan established JASIC as a specialized technical organization that support the Government's harmonization activities, concurrently with the establishment of its Geneva Office in order to fully participate in all the related meetings in addition to the WP29 sessions. That is also the time when Japan began proactive contribution to the development of internationally harmonized regulations.
- Beside that, it was time when the 1958 Agreement had already affected not only to ECE member states but also to non-ECE member states. Japan thought it essential to accede to the Agreement for the acceleration of its harmonization activities and for the realization of the prompt promotion of the worldwide usage of safe and environmentally-friendly vehicles and the development of automobile industries. And upon the amendments to the Agreement which opened the door to non-European countries, Japan could finally acceded to it, as the first non-European country, in 1998 when was the fortieth year of the Agreement. Subsequently, WP29 established its status as "World Forum for Harmonization of Vehicle Regulations" in 2000, both in terms of name and reality.

2. Japan's future direction for international harmonization of vehicle regulations

- From now on, we would like to further the application of ECE Regulations and contribute to the development of gtrs including WLTP, HFCV, and Pedestrian Protection, through keeping the active participation in the World Forum, necessary proposals and data and information providing.
- Currently, the use of new technologies on vehicle including the ITS technologies that would contribute to the safety of vehicles and environmental protection has spread worldwide. In order to facilitate the dissemination of vehicles with those technologies onboard, we think it important to promote the activities for building up the common understandings on such technologies through the exchange of views on them.
- Further more, in order to disseminate the safer and more environmentally friendly vehicles worldwide, together with further development of automobile industries, it is important to expand worldwide the international harmonization of regulations and mutual recognition of approvals in the future. In this context, Japan is conducting internal studies on a basis for mutual recognition of a whole vehicle certification through JASIC, aiming at the proposal at WP29. We would like to report the progress of the studies and ask for opinions by the participants in WP29 in due time.

3. Japan's expectation for the World Forum

- The World Forum has been expanding its activities from a forum within Europe at the time of the establishment of the 1958 Agreement to a worldwide forum, going through the accession by non-EU countries. That is to say, the World Forum has been establishing its stable position and increasing its importance in the world. Taking account of this situation, Japan believes that the role of this Agreement on further leap of the international harmonization activities would be more and more important.
- The Government of Japan, as a member of Asian countries, has actively promoted the exchange of views and information on the harmonization of regulations with Asian countries, and recently, the number of Asian countries acceding to the 1958 Agreement and the 1998 Agreement has increased. Taking account of such situation, we expect for the World Forum to make further progress as a forum addressing international harmonization of vehicle regulations where countries all over the world literally participate in its activities, through encouraging participation of those countries, including Asian countries, which have not yet participated in the WP29 activities, promoting more active exchange of views and information on up-to-date technical regulations, developing genuine globally harmonized regulations by the promotion of incorporation of gtr into ECE Regulations, and further expansion of Contracting Parties to the 1958 Agreement.
- Currently, the technology development shows striking progress, especially in the field of low-emission vehicles in some countries and the ITS technologies seen in the

presentations from industries at the ITS World Congress. Since the World Forum is a unique forum promoting international harmonization of vehicle technical regulations, we also expect its initiative on the worldwide dissemination of safer and more environmentally friendly vehicles using those new technologies, and we would like to express our intention to make further contribution to that initiative.

- Finally, congratulating the fiftieth anniversary of the 1958 Agreement, I would like to express my sincere appreciation and respect to those who has contributed to the WP29 activities so far, especially to Mr. Kisulenko and Mr. Gauvine, and the WP29 Secretariat that has made lots of efforts in a smooth administration of the forum. I hope the World Forum would make quantum leaps in another fifty years by more active participation by current participating countries and further expansion of participating countries.
- Thank you for the opportunity to have this speech.