

**Written Statement by the Delegation of Japan**  
**at the Second Meeting of Deputy Ministers of the Arctic Council**  
**15 May 2012**  
**Stockholm, Sweden**

The delegation of Japan wishes to express, on behalf of the Government of Japan, its sincere appreciation to the Chairmanship of Sweden and the other Members of the Arctic Council for inviting Japan as an ad-hoc observer to this Second Meeting of Deputy Ministers. The delegation of Japan would like to extend its gratitude to the Council for allowing it to distribute this brief statement.

Japan appreciates the role played by the Arctic Council as a high level intergovernmental forum to provide means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among its eight Member States, with an active involvement of the Permanent Participants. We are highly interested in the Council's concrete activities undertaken through the work of the six Working Groups regarding environmental protection and sustainable development of the Arctic.

As a maritime state surrounded by sea, Japan relies heavily on marine transportation for most of its trade. The newly emerging situation in the Arctic Ocean resulting from climate change and the decrease in sea ice consequently is a matter of concern not only for the Arctic region, but for the whole world, including Japan, which is making incessant efforts to protect the global environment. Such changes in the Arctic also provide opportunities for new types of cooperation in many areas including scientific research, environmental protection and sustainable development. We have already observed that active discussions on these emerging issues are taking place. We recognize the crucial importance of the Council and its work under such circumstances, and we think that it can deal with the issues in a practical way.

Japan's support for the Council is reflected in our frequent participation in meetings related to the Council. Since submitting its formal application for the observer status in the Council in June 2009, Japan, as an ad-hoc observer, has attended all meetings of Senior Arctic Officials, the Deputy Ministers Meeting in 2010, and the Ministerial Meeting in 2011. Japanese experts also participated in meetings of the working group of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) in February 2010 and

October 2011, as well as in other relevant meetings. We are grateful to have been invited to those meetings.

Through its competent research institutes, Japan has conducted continuous observation on the global environment and climate, as well as marine scientific research in the Arctic in cooperation with researchers from various states including the Member States of the Arctic Council and other organizations. In addition, we have promoted Arctic environmental research with the following two additions introduced in 2011. First, the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) launched a new interdisciplinary Arctic science project to clarify and evaluate the global influence of the Arctic, entitled the “Green Network of Excellence (GRENE)” project. The GRENE project will be conducted for five years, focusing on four strategic topics regarding the Arctic environment. Second, the Japan Consortium for Arctic Environmental Research (JCAR) was initiated, with the participation of approximately 300 researchers. JCAR was established in order to strengthen research capability and collaboration among relevant researchers, and it will address long-term Arctic environmental research planning, human resource development, and community outreach inside and outside Japan.

As demonstrated by this background, Japan wishes to assure the Council that it has the determination and ability to make useful and substantial contributions to the work of the Council as a permanent observer. This has already been shown in the additional information which we submitted in December 2011 in light of the criteria for admitting observers, agreed on at the 7<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Meeting of the Council in May 2011. It is thus Japan’s strong wish that an early decision by the Council to approve Japan’s application for a permanent observer status be made.

The delegation of Japan would like to express its deepest appreciation for the outstanding leadership and work of the Chairmanship of Sweden over the last year and for the cooperation and assistance provided by the chair to Japan. It also wishes great success to the Chairmanship of Sweden to which Japan assures its continued cooperation for the rest of its term.

(End)