Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe
at the High-Level Panel for a Sustainable Ocean Economy
September 23, 2019 New York, USA

Excellency, Prime Minister Erna Solberg of the Kingdom of Norway, Excellency, President Tommy Remengesau of the Republic of Palau
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Distinguished delegates,

Today, we have issued a “Call to Ocean-Based Climate Action” by the heads of 14 nations of the High-Level Panel. For this notable achievement, I would like to congratulate, with respect, Prime Minister Solberg of Norway, on her admirable leadership.

In order to hand over this beautiful blue earth to the next generation, we must address the wide-ranging issues concerning our oceans.

Today, I would like to specifically point to the problem of marine plastic litter.

On marine plastic litter, the G20 nations, at the Osaka Summit last June, agreed to share the “Osaka Blue Ocean Vision,” a visionary concept that aims to reduce additional pollution by marine plastic litter to zero by 2050. In order to realize this vision, the G20 nations also agreed on establishing the G20 Implementation Framework for Actions on Marine Plastic Litter, which strives to advance actions to combat marine litter based on continuous sharing of new information.

I would like to call upon all countries around the world, including members of this High-Level Panel, to work together toward achieving this vision and propose to embed in the recommendations by the High-Level Panel during the 2020 United Nations Ocean Conference, a call for all countries in the world to unite in embracing the Osaka Blue Ocean Vision, to take effective measures to combat marine plastic litter.
We believe that the key to preventing plastics from turning into wastes is to advance the “reduce, reuse, recycle” approach, or the so-called “3R strategy.”

To attest this view, the Government of Japan has just adopted a Resource Circulation Strategy for Plastics that aims to re-configure plastics in a reusable and recyclable form by the Year 2025, and to advance concrete measures to achieve these goals.

At the same time, it is also important to focus on the issue of managing plastic wastes. Japan plans to support waste management in developing countries, with a goal to train 10,000 waste-management experts worldwide by Year 2025, making full use of our past experience and technologies.

Additionally, driving innovation is critical in resolving the issue of marine plastic litter. Companies in Japan are now striving to develop and promote biodegradable plastics alternatives that are soluble in the sea. We would like to continue promoting international partnerships to advance such measures to combat marine plastic litter, taking into account innovations based on recent advances in technology.

At the G20 Osaka Summit, the Japanese Presidency also highlighted the need to eliminate illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and all G20 heads of state at the summit united in full agreement. I look forward to working on these important issues associated with the ocean economy, with fellow High-Level Panel members, as we head toward the next UN Ocean Conference in June 2020.