

# **Resolution on the Desirable Form of Japan's Official Development Assistance Based on the Development Cooperation Charter**

June 19, 2015

Special Committee on Official Development Assistance  
and Related Matters,  
House of Councillors, Japan

It has been 60 years since Japan started to extend its Official Development Assistance (ODA) in October 1954, when the Cabinet approved Japan's accession to the Colombo Plan. During these years, Japan successfully accomplished its postwar reconstruction and achieved a high economic growth that helped it become one of the world's major players. Thus, based upon its role expected internationally, Japan has contributed to secure peace, stability and prosperity of the international community by undertaking efforts to solve the diversifying development tasks of developing countries through the implementation of a unique ODA commensurate with its historic experiences. Along with the expanding role and budget of ODA, debates in the Diet for a need to clarify the philosophy and principles of Japan's ODA policies mounted, which prompted the Cabinet to decide Japan's first ODA Charter in 1992. This Charter was revised in 2003. Through these efforts, the outline of Japan's ODA policy was formed, which includes the perspective of human security, avoiding uses for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts and supporting the self-help efforts and ownership of developing countries.

Amidst such a situation, along with the changing post-cold war international environment and further progress in globalization, circumstances surrounding ODA dramatically changed, prompting development challenges to become more diverse, complex and broader-based and increasing the roles of funds and activities other than ODA in development cooperation. Given such a background, the Government of Japan, in an attempt to appropriately address development challenges not only through ODA but also by mobilizing various other resources, revised the ODA Charter and established the Development Cooperation Charter on February 10 this year.

The Government of Japan, noting with sincerity the experiences, expertise and lessons learned in the past 60-year history of Japan's ODA and in the process of further enhancing the evaluation and trust built up to the present, should take appropriate measures particularly on the following points outlined below, in order to achieve the goals set out in the Development Cooperation Charter that calls for further proactive contribution by Japan to ensure peace, stability and prosperity of the international community.

1. The principle of "human security" which attempts to ensure individuals' happiness and dignified existence, based on the basic spirit of the preamble of the Japanese Constitution that says, "We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want" is a valuable perception which Japan should widely appeal to the international community. In implementing diversified development cooperation, the government, upholding that "human security" is the guiding principle which lies at the foundation of development cooperation, should not only focus on protecting and empowering vulnerable people such as children, women and ethnic minorities, but in order to meet the needs of these people, strengthen efforts to support their participation in the development process and take appropriate measures to ensure their fundamental human rights.
2. In executing ODA, the government should continue to place importance in endorsing the areas set in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which are the most fundamental areas of development such as eradicating absolute poverty and improving education, health and sanitation systems. In tandem, since economic growth is the key for developing countries to achieve self-reliant development, the government should support their economic growth, leveraging on Japan's strength, through infrastructure improvement and other measures, thus complementing efforts outlined in the MDGs. In carrying out assistance measures for economic growth, the carefully formulated projects that meet the development stages of the recipient countries and regional considerations should be brought forward in order to realize "quality growth" based on the principle of "human security" that provides for inclusiveness, sustainability and resilience so as to avert widening disparities, social instability and environmental destruction.
3. The government should strengthen efforts to lead discussions regarding the post-2015 international development goals, working toward the ultimate goal of sustainable development so that better understanding can be obtained on areas in which Japan's expertise and experiences can be effectively utilized, such as mainstreaming disaster risk reduction,

promoting universal health coverage and actions against climate change. Simultaneously, efforts should be enforced in training and securing human resources that can appropriately communicate technology applications and system management to the recipient countries in addition to promoting cooperation in these areas in collaboration with diverse actors, including private companies.

4. Under the circumstances in which development challenges are getting more diverse, complex and broader-based, while the role of development cooperation, which has ODA at its core, is expanding, the government has stipulated the strategic application of ODA in the “National Security Strategy” and the “Japan Revitalization Strategy” as decided at a Cabinet Meeting. However, there are concerns over various aspects, such as the relationship between ODA and national interests as well as the reaction of the international community. In order to respond to these concerns, the government should intensify efforts to provide proper publicity, including through activities of our embassies and consulates, to clarify and deliver in-depth explanations both to our people and to the world about the objectives of ODA, which are implemented under the Development Cooperation Charter.
5. Our non-military development cooperation has been highly valued by the international community as an instrument of special distinction that embodies the image of a peaceful nation and its way of international contributions. The principle of avoiding any use of development cooperation for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts has been the cornerstone of our development cooperation. The government should always be prudent to have prior consultations with the recipient countries and to take secure measures such as monitoring and disclosing information so as to ascertain that our development cooperation activities will not be diverted for military purposes, will not undermine our neutrality and/or trust, and will not bring about any form of skepticism.
6. In order to respond appropriately to the enormous demand for development, collaboration among the various actors in development cooperation is becoming a crucial issue, in addition to official funds and activities including ODA. As regards the collaboration between the private companies and ODA, although the nature of activities of private business is profit making, given the circumstances, the government should improve the screening system of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in order to support the projects that would truly contribute to development from the viewpoint of sustainability, creation of high-quality employment and self-reliant development of developing countries. At the same time, sufficient information on the results and effects of assistance programs should be publicized.

7. NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs) are one of the major actors in development cooperation. Their finely tuned activities at the grass-roots level are noteworthy from the perspective of realization of “human security,” which focuses on individuals. The networks and know-hows embraced by the NGOs/CSOs will become a powerful resource for the mainstreaming of development policies in the international community. In order to make the best use of such strengths in the field of our development cooperation, the existing schemes, such as Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects and NGO-Ministry of Foreign Affairs Regular Consultation Meetings, should be improved and strengthened in terms of funding as well as policy formation. Furthermore, the base of the actors of development cooperation should be expanded by promoting active use of JICA’s volunteer projects such as the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, which celebrates the 50th anniversary of its establishment this year.
  
8. The Cabinet decision on the Development Cooperation Charter will expand the horizon of development cooperation. Although we are at present facing a severe financial situation, measures should be taken to strengthen the foundation for implementation and to reinforce the financial base, including the development of new financing mechanisms, in order to reach the goal of increasing the ODA expenditure/GNI ratio to 0.7% as early as possible, as committed internationally, taking into account Japan’s hosting of the G7 Summit Meeting in Ise-Shima next year. To that end, the government should implement a more elaborate PDCA cycle in order to bring beneficial effects to the recipient countries and also to contribute to our diplomacy as well as for the benefit of our own people. The government should consequently disclose information, including that of projects carried out by actors other than the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in a transparent and clear manner toward our people in order to establish accountability. In addition, by promoting “selection and concentration,” ODA should be implemented in an efficient manner in order to enhance its strategic characteristic and effectiveness.