

Resolution on Japan's Development Policy in the Lead-up to the G20 Summit in Osaka and TICAD 7 and International Activities of the House of Councillors

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

Three years have passed since the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted at a General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015 as development goals to be achieved by 2030, and questions are now being asked about concrete measures to achieve these goals. Against that backdrop, in June this year, the G20 Summit will be held in Osaka, the largest international conference ever held in Japan, while in August, the seventh meeting of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7) will be held in Yokohama.

As one of the world's major donor countries of official development assistance (ODA), Japan has extensive experience and considerable expertise in this field. The country has contributed to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community through distinctive assistance based on the concept of human security. As host nation, Japan is expected to proactively address the development issues, including the achievement of the SDGs, and lead the debates on the agenda at these important international conferences. The country is also expected to implement its own effective measures. It is hoped that these efforts will give a boost of momentum toward the first SDG summit to be held at the United Nations in September this year.

The international activities carried out by the House of Councillors, including the dispatch of the ODA research mission and attendance at international conferences, play a crucial role in monitoring the appropriateness of the way policies are implemented as a legislative body and helping to promote understanding of Japan's assistance with regard to ODA and the government's other initiatives. The opportunities for and importance of these activities are increasing year by year. With diverse actors increasingly shouldering diplomatic roles in a mutually complementary manner alongside government initiatives, parliamentary diplomacy undertaken by members of the Diet is more important than ever. In this regard, some reports issued by delegations of ODA research missions have indicated that the fact that the House is currently known by the English name "House of Councillors" has in some cases proved a hindrance to missions, owing to an insufficient awareness on the part of people in the places visited of the fact that it constitutes a House of the National Diet of Japan.

There is a need for discussions within the House about how the House and its members are expressed in English. The discussions should take into consideration conditions in the international community, the historical background, and the likely impact on society in the event that a change were made.

The government also needs to take this opportunity to address a number of matters relating to Japan's development cooperation activities and related domestic measures. These are listed below

1. Various social, economic, and environmental challenges have become interrelated and are growing on a global scale. These include income disparity, poverty, terrorism, refugees and displaced persons, climate change, and marine plastic litter. The SDGs set goals that not only developing countries but the entire international community including developed countries should work toward to bring about a sustainable, diverse, and inclusive society in which "no one will be left behind." Japan should exert leadership at international conferences and similar venues to achieve these goals. In particular, the government needs to take a lead in the international debate to ensure that there is a shared awareness of the importance of quality growth and to achieve the international coordination needed to make this a reality.
2. To help bring about autonomous development through quality growth in developing countries, we should do more to promote Japan's strengths in technology transfer, job creation, and quality infrastructure with due consideration for openness, transparency, economic efficiency, and debt sustainability. We should play a leading role in the debate in the international community toward making these the international standards. While doing so, we must take actions to contribute to the achievement of net-zero emissions of greenhouse gases based on the Paris Agreement. Also, considering other developed nations' ODA programs, we must expand assistance to social sectors including education, health, water supply and sewerage, and increase the ratio of assistance to least developed countries.
3. The situation in Africa is the most serious in terms of fundamental development problems including poverty and hunger. The region is the most important key to achieving the SDGs, but at the moment many of the basic prerequisites for quality growth are not in place, and more must be done to build an environment that will attract more private sector investment. Development assistance to the region should be made an even higher priority than before. As a sincere partner of African countries, Japan must work to grasp the needs on the ground through TICAD and other venues, further increasing its collaboration with NGOs and

continuing to provide effective assistance that helps to bring about true autonomy and eradication of poverty.

4. To ensure that the Indian and Pacific Oceans are free and open seas that will bring stability and prosperity to all countries, we should proactively undertake measures to strengthen connectivity in both tangible and intangible manners among the countries in the Asia Pacific Region, the Middle East, and Africa, offering the experience and expertise that Japan has accumulated over the years. Taking into account the importance of the role played by newly emerging economies, we need to cooperate toward shared understanding through proactive dialogue, including how to provide development cooperation to other countries and measures to address new problems such as the middle income trap toward further growth.
5. The eradication of poverty is one of the most important goals among the SDGs. To help eradicate poverty from the world, we should enhance and bolster our measures to promote industry, bring about gender equality, achieve a fair society, and enhance social security systems. There are concerns that a further increase in world population will cause more serious shortages of food. The food problem has a major impact on the peace and stability of the international community, and finding solutions for this problem is an urgent challenge. As a country that relies on imports for much of its food, Japan should work to increase agricultural ODA to boost food and other production in order to solve the food problem, making full use of its high-level, cutting edge technology and experience in areas such as rice cultivation and biotechnology.
6. To provide efficient and effective assistance for massive and diversifying needs, closely collaborative and strategic measures are essential that involve not only the government, but also grassroots participation by diverse actors, including NGOs, private companies, local governments, and universities. This requires support for putting in place a system that will enable more effective measures to be carried out, clarifying the division of roles, considering the characteristics of each actor, so that they can share an overall image of development cooperation involving both government and the private sector, and take more effective measures. It is important to foster highly competent NGOs capable of carrying out the role expected of them. As strengthening the financial foundations for this is an urgent issue, the necessary budgetary measures should be taken, with the proviso that the NGOs will work to become self-supporting, and with due steps taken to ensure transparency.

7. We should work to put in place an environment that will allow private enterprises, including small and medium-size enterprises, to expand more proactively into African countries and other developing countries and contribute to their sustainable growth, as well as promoting the economic growth of Japan. When assisting overseas activities by private enterprises, due consideration should be given to make sure that they maintain good working conditions and respect other human rights provisions.
8. International cooperation on a regional level can be expected not only to contribute significantly to the solution of problems in developing countries and to promoting understanding of Japan but also to be highly effective in regional revitalization. We should strengthen support so that local governments can engage in measures more proactively. In light of the need for further initiatives toward multicultural coexistence in Japan in the future, we need to plan for fuller measures to establish a sound foundation for Japanese language education overseas. With the understanding of partner countries, we should take measures to provide fuller support for Japanese language education by utilizing the Japan Foundation and JICA projects as part of our development cooperation.
9. The JICA overseas cooperation volunteers who are active around the world play the vital role of ensuring the visibility of Japanese aid. However, the numbers of applicants for these positions are declining. In addition to effective recruitment activities in coordination with educational institutions, Japan needs to work even more proactively to further establish an environment where people can participate without worry by strengthening measures to ensure safety, providing support for further career paths after participants return to Japan, and disseminating and enhancing systems that allow people to participate while in work.
10. Strong collaboration involving all actors is vital for achieving the SDGs, and it is essential to ensure the understanding of the entire Japanese people regarding the role of ODA in this context. We should promote further understanding of the significance of the SDGs and ODA, not only through promotional activities, but also by enhancing learning in school education and otherwise expanding and improving measures.
11. In the current extremely difficult financial situation, the government should carry out proper and thorough evaluation of each ODA project and work to reflect said evaluations in operations for the following year to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the limited ODA budget. Full and proper measures must be taken to analyze the reasons for the problem that arose in relation to management of the enforcement of JICA budget in fiscal 2017 and steps taken to ensure that a similar problem does not arise again in the future.

12. Toward the achievement of the SDGs, Japan should take actions to achieve the international goal of an ODA budget equivalent to 0.7 percent of gross national income (GNI) with an eye to sound government finances in Japan. It should also encourage the debate by taking advantage of the opportunities presented by its time as host nation of the G20 meeting and the Leading Group on Innovative Financing for Development in considering innovative fund-raising mechanisms including an international solidarity levy.

We hereby resolve to adopt the measures listed above.