

Resolution on the Desirable Form of Japan's Development Cooperation and the Development Cooperation Charter

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Special Committee on Official Development Assistance and Related Matters
as well as Okinawa and Northern Problems, House of Councillors

Japan's development cooperation has a history of about 70 years since joining the Colombo Plan in 1954. During this course, Japan has also achieved its own development based on mutual understanding and relationships of trust with other countries, and has steadily built a position as one of the major responsible members of the international community. As Japan came to play an increasingly important role as a major donor country, in order to define the basic philosophy and the principles for implementation of Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japan's first ODA Charter was decided by the Cabinet in 1992, followed by a revised version in 2003, and the renamed Development Cooperation Charter was decided by the Cabinet in 2015, clarifying the basic concepts of Japan's development cooperation, such as the perspective of human security, avoidance of any use of development cooperation for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts, and support for self-help efforts by developing countries.

Today, the global challenges that the international community must tackle together, including poverty and hunger, climate change, and infectious diseases, are becoming increasingly serious, while at the same time, geopolitical competition has intensified, the international order is being seriously challenged, including by attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by use of force, and there are concerns over fragmentation of the international community. In this manner, the international situation surrounding development cooperation is facing a serious crisis.

Even while taking into account the current situation of the world, which is in such a critical phase, we should remember the respect for human

rights and peace, which are universal values under the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and international human rights treaties and the fact that the trust from the international community that Japan has built through the implementation of non-military development cooperation with human security as the basic philosophy has formed the very foundation of Japan's diplomacy and development cooperation, and we should also reaffirm the values and significance of development cooperation itself; on such basis we must pursue the desirable form of development cooperation that is commensurate with ourselves, giving consideration to the perspective of contributing to the peace, safety, and affluence of the people of the beneficiary countries as well as to the peace and security of the Japanese people.

Given these factors, the government should take appropriate measures as follows through the implementation of the recently revised Development Cooperation Charter and other efforts.

1. Promotion of development cooperation based on the philosophy of human security

The philosophy of "human security" advocated in the 2003 revision of the ODA Charter coincides with the spirit of the Constitution of Japan, and can be positioned as a guiding principle underlying every case of development cooperation implemented by Japan. Japan should summarize such experience of having won people's trust over a long period of time, and utilize it as a resource. In implementing development cooperation, Japan should continue to place importance on human resource development that constitutes the basis for countries' development and promote respect for fundamental human rights under the UN Charter and international human rights treaties to which Japan is a contracting state, elimination of poverty and hunger, and gender mainstreaming. In addition, Japan should push forward initiatives for building a society that is inclusive of diverse people, by focusing on the protection of the increasing number of refugees and internally displaced

persons as well as the protection and capacity enhancement of people who are inclined to be put in a vulnerable and discriminatory position, such as children, women, persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples, and LGBT people. Moreover, as companies have come to have further growing impacts around the world with the advance of globalization, Japan should implement development cooperation in accordance with, for example, the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights, which is based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, so as to prevent human rights abuses and environmental destruction mainly in supply chains in developing areas.

2. Promotion of development cooperation based on multilateralism and a spirit of co-creation

The key for the international community in overcoming the crisis of fragmentation would be to take a sincere attitude in working closely and solving issues with the people of developing countries that are facing problems such as food crises due to conflicts and extreme weather and energy issues against the backdrop of the situation in Ukraine, while respecting multilateralism. In deepening the relationships with these countries through development cooperation, it is necessary to jointly create what truly suits the interests of the people of the partner countries through careful dialogue and collaboration with the parties concerned, including the beneficiary countries' governments, while respecting ownership, intentions and intrinsic characteristics of the country concerned. Based on this spirit, Japan should promptly implement more enhanced quality cooperation mainly in the fields in which Japan can effectively utilize its knowledge and experience, such as global health including universal health coverage, infrastructure development for securing intra-regional connectivity, nutrition that serves as the basis of people's health, disaster risk reduction, and education, while eliciting the partner countries' potential needs for assistance. In addition, for

implementing initiatives in these fields more effectively and efficiently, it is essential to collaborate and cooperate with civil society organizations (CSOs) in developing countries that are the main players tackling development challenges, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Japan and the countries concerned that conduct activities in a position closest to CSOs. Therefore, Japan should further expand and promote the participation and involvement of NGOs and CSOs in development cooperation, and also actively carry out measures for supporting through ODA the collaborative initiatives by NGOs and CSOs in Japan and developing countries for resolving development challenges.

3. Ensuring non-military principles

Development cooperation for non-military purposes embodies Japan's stance on making international contributions as a peace-loving nation, and Japan has adhered to the principle of avoiding any use of development cooperation for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts since the ODA Charter of 1992 as an indispensable element of development cooperation. Japan must continue to adhere to and thoroughly implement this principle in the future. Under the National Security Strategy of Japan decided by the Cabinet in December 2022, the Official Security Assistance (OSA) was established as a framework separate from ODA. Sufficient consideration should be given so that its establishment will not undermine the assets of ODA or the international trust that Japan has built to date. At the same time, in carrying out development cooperation in the future, in order to ensure that Japan's development cooperation activities will never be diverted for military purposes or lead to human rights violations, and will not bring about such suspicion, Japan should prudently have consultations with the recipient countries in advance. Even after implementation, Japan should ensure effective monitoring of, for example, the situation concerning assured use for non-military purposes and respect for fundamental human rights.

Should diversion for a military purpose or a human rights abuse be found or suspected, measures should be taken to ensure the non-military principle, including by considering how ODA should be provided to the relevant country and taking necessary measures.

4. Development cooperation that attracts investments

Private actors that are motivated to contribute to addressing economic and social challenges in such fields as digital, decarbonization, and the environment could play an important role in the resolution of development challenges and sound economic growth of developing countries through the use of expert knowledge and the latest technologies. While sufficiently considering the government's responsibilities in development assistance and the essential role expected of public funds, and making it a major premise to continue to respect these in the future, as a complement to them, Japan should support through ODA the initiatives of private companies, including start-ups and SMEs, that align with the philosophy and purpose of Japan's ODA and that contribute to improving the lives of people and creating social value in developing countries. While strengthening collaboration among organizations handling ODA and other public funds, Japan should actively implement measures for attracting private finance to programs/projects that contribute to solving development challenges.

5. Leading discussions with an eye to the post-2030 international development goals

Year 2023 marks the halfway point for achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). However, delays have been caused to the progress in SDGs due to various factors, including the effects of climate change such as droughts and floods, the COVID-19 pandemic, confusion of the world economy against the backdrop of the situation in Ukraine, and the substantial shortage of development finance. While the world faces serious

food crises, and conflicts remain as the biggest cause for hunger, there is demand for comprehensive and financially backed international cooperation based on the spirit of respecting and promoting multilateralism and involving cross-sectoral coordination of the humanitarian development peace nexus. With an eye to discussions on the post-2030 international development goals, Japan should, through a cross-sectoral approach against intricately intertwined issues, carry out such activities as maintaining and strengthening international norms and principles grounded in universal values, including respect for human rights, and implementing cooperation that does not involve debt traps or economic coercion and that does not undermine the independence or sustainability of developing countries, as well as indicating the need for and effectiveness of these measures, thereby expanding the domain that brings common benefits to the international community.

6. Development cooperation understood among the nation

Development cooperation is expected to play an even more important role in the international community that is facing a deepening fragmentation risk, and the foundation for its implementation needs to be enhanced. In particular, in realizing the internationally-agreed target of increasing ODA to 0.7% of gross national income (GNI) under Japan's extremely severe fiscal situation, it is indispensable to drastically increase its ODA budget and to expand and consider a wide range of financial sources, including the introduction of a new financing means. To this end, the public's understanding is more important than anything, and it is essential to implement initiatives to perform a PDCA cycle along with scientific verification based on data, increase transparency by actively and systematically disclosing information and ensuring accountability, and indicate the effects of development cooperation and the appropriateness of the process to the people. In order to encourage the people to regard ODA as a matter in which they are involved, while nurturing

awareness among the people that each one of them is the main actor concerning the world's development challenges through the promotion of education on development cooperation, the discussions should be made as open as possible with a wide range of participants, including those from private companies, CSOs, local governments, universities, and research institutions. In addition, Japan should strengthen its initiatives to gather, develop, and support the activities of highly capable human resources that will play a leading role in Japan's development cooperation.

We hereby resolve to adopt the measures listed above.