

On 50th Anniversary of the OECD

On behalf of the people of Japan, I would like to extend heartfelt congratulations on the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the OECD. In this landmark year, I would like to ponder the past achievements of the OECD and express my expectations for the role of the OECD in the future.

Achievements

In the footpath of development that Japan followed after WWII, the OECD has played a critical role. Since Japan joined the OECD as the first non-Transatlantic country in 1964, only three years after the Organisation's establishment, Japan has actively participated in the discussions and activities of the Organisation, and it has made the best use of the policy analyses and advice in the planning of its national economic policies. The OECD is sometimes called the "global think tank", along with its corps of specialists not only on economics but also on development, social affairs, education, and the environment, and it has made solid contributions to the international agendas of the day. I would like to reiterate the significant role the OECD has played in the stable development of the world economy.

Future Challenges

Half a century has passed, however, and we are in the midst of the structural changes characterised by the emergence of new economies. We are also faced with global challenges, such as climate change, as well as social agendas, such as ageing societies. Furthermore, after the recent unprecedented financial and economic crisis, international co-ordination is required now more than ever, so as to ensure sustainable economic paths.

How can the OECD contribute to these political agendas, while maintaining and strengthening its relevance in the global economy?

I believe that it is crucial for the OECD to continue to prove its attractiveness in the expanded global context as well as in its relations with non-Members, while keeping its valuable traditions. These traditions include the peer-learning process, in which Members jointly learn from the experience and knowledge of others. The culture of carrying out frank exchanges of views and fruitful discussion is invaluable, and it was from this culture that a number of rules and extensive policy useful to members were

developed.

To our great satisfaction, the appeal of the OECD seems to have recently become recognized by non-Members, including the emerging economies. I understand that various policy fora related to the OECD are now taking place in various corners of the world, as outreach activities. Many policy makers and specialists from the emerging and developing countries are actively taking part in these meetings. Especially in the Southeast Asia region -- which has been designated as a strategic region for the OECD -- many countries are learning from specialised policy advice of the OECD, designed to put into place the right environment for international investment. Japan will continue to assist such OECD outreach initiatives.

Another good tradition of the OECD is its capacity to undertake horizontal analyses and address structural issues. This is the capacity to provide analyses not from a single policy viewpoint, but from a multi-disciplinary angle. In addressing global challenges, such horizontality is needed. For example, the Green Growth Strategy cuts across various policy areas, such as industrial innovation, the environment, population demographics, and education. I also believe that it is an OECD strength to provide objective policy advice on what must change in order to address structural problems.

I hope that the OECD will make the best use of these strengths and advantages in addressing global challenges, which seem to be becoming more complex. I highly value the contributions that the OECD is making to the G8, G20 and APEC under the leadership of Secretary-General Ángel Gurría. I believe these are very useful, drawing upon the comparative advantage the OECD has developed to date. I hope that the OECD will fully express its specialised capabilities in the global expanse, and that it will play a role worthy of the name of "the World's OECD".

Japan's political agenda and the OECD

The issues which Japan has to tackle, such as fiscal consolidation, employment, development of human capital, education, and ageing are topical agendas discussed in the OECD. Japan adopted the New Growth Strategy in June 2010 pledging to realise a strong economy, robust public finances, and strong social security system in an integral manner. In September, the Government of Japan established the Council on the Realisation of the New Growth Strategy, and started discussions on the concrete measures to be implemented. I greatly appreciate the valuable contribution the OECD

made in drafting the Strategy.

I believe that the solutions for the social and economic challenges we face can also be the catalyst for the creation of new demand and employment. It is important that we harness these for new growth. The OECD is instrumental as the source of specialized knowledge and wisdom for this purpose. I believe there is ample scope for Members as well as emerging economies to further make use of the OECD.

Every year, a number of ministers, policy makers and specialists visit the OECD for various kinds of meetings. They express their views, listen to statements by other participants, and use these as reference for their own policies. Talented OECD Secretariat members make analyses and policy advice based on such discussions. The history of 50 years of such engagement is worthy of our highest respect.

As I look back upon the past 50 years and think of the OECD's expected role in the future, I am confident that the OECD will continue to make valuable contributions to the international community, as an international organization of high added value. Let me assure you that Japan will not spare any efforts for this purpose.