

Foreword

The international community today faces various global challenges that transcend national borders, including conflicts, terrorism, refugees, poverty, climate change and infectious diseases. This has created a situation in which any of the risks that exist in regions worldwide can potentially exert a direct negative impact on the peace, stability and prosperity of the entire world, including Japan. Furthermore, economic growth in emerging and developing countries is becoming vital to the stable growth of the entire global economy.

Under such circumstances, it goes without saying that as a responsible member of the international community, it is important for Japan to hold high the banner of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation, to make greater contributions to the international community’s peace, stability and prosperity, and in doing so to strive to secure its national interests. As a means for realizing that, development cooperation mainly through ODA is one of Japan’s important policy tools. In other words, it is essential to utilize ODA to effectively resolve global challenges, such as eradicating poverty and building global peace, and to ultimately beneficially impact Japan as well.

The development challenges the world faces are changing significantly. For example, although development in developing countries progressed to some extent, challenges such as political and economic instability, internal disparities and the “middle income trap” often exist. Furthermore, the world is witnessing an enormous infrastructure demand, and in order to respond to such a demand, initiatives are required that promote quality infrastructure development in accordance with international standards and that encourage the mobilization of private funds in order to deal with the supply-and-demand gap for development funding. Additionally, there are also some countries that are being left behind in terms of growth due to various vulnerabilities caused by internal conflicts, geographic and climatic conditions, and other problems. In such countries, it is necessary to ensure the stable foundations of development, such as the rule of law and democratization in addition to humanitarian assistance.

As such, the world is facing more diverse and complex challenges, and furthermore, these challenges are increasingly widespread, transcending national borders as the world becomes increasingly globalized. In facing such challenges, the world is required more than ever to exercise ingenuity and take action. Additionally, in the present international community, various actors including private companies, local governments and NGOs are playing increasingly important roles in addressing development challenges, supporting sustainable growth of developing countries, and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To ensure the peace, stability and prosperity of the international community, it will therefore be necessary to mobilize such diverse power.

Meanwhile, Japan’s ODA is facing critical public scrutiny in the midst of the severe fiscal situation and the declining birthrate and aging population. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan has a responsibility to fully explain the activities and significance of ODA to the Japanese people, to secure their understanding and support and to utilize ODA more strategically and effectively.

This White Paper showcases the significance and role that development cooperation has in realizing the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy” that Japan has been advocating and promoting, along with the efforts that Japan has taken thus far in order to achieve the “SDGs,” unanimously adopted at the United Nations in 2015. Furthermore, it also introduces initiatives for supporting Japanese small and medium-sized enterprises through ODA.

I hope that this White Paper will prove useful in deepening the understanding of the Japanese people regarding various challenges surrounding Japan’s development cooperation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan is aiming to realize foreign diplomacy together with and supported by the Japanese people.

February 2018

Minister for Foreign Affairs

河野太郎

Taro Kono

