

Statement by Mr.. Minoru KIUCHI
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of JAPAN

Your Excellency Mr. Hamrokhon ZARIFI, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan,
Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for its efforts to host the 11th ACD Foreign Ministers' Meeting and for the warm hospitality extended to us during our stay.

Asia is the most promising growth center in the world. If it continues to follow its recent trajectory, its share of global GDP is expected to nearly double to 52 percent by 2050. However, continued growth of this order is by no means preordained. The region must overcome various challenges in both the short and long terms.

Fortunately, in Asia, multilayered networks for regional cooperation to tackle such challenges have been developed. Among these, the ACD is highly significant and, indeed, unique in that its member countries are located across the whole continent of Asia and display a high degree of cultural and religious diversity. Promoting cooperation and dialogue under the ACD and making the most of its unique qualities will contribute to deepening mutual understanding among the member countries and thus to building a basis for the sustainable development of the region as

a whole.

Mr. Chair,

Today, among the challenges we are facing, I would like to focus on and specifically raise the issues of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), disaster risk reduction, the environment and the promotion of exchange.

To sustain our current growth, Asia must fully address the issue of poverty and deal with inequality within countries, which could undermine social cohesion and stability. In this regard, the acceleration of the efforts to achieve the MDGs and discussions on the post-2015 development agenda (Post-MDGs) are matters of profound significance for us.

The post-2015 development framework should build on the lessons learned from the current MDGs, having regard for the changes in the international community in recent years. While taking advantage of the strengths of the current MDGs, which are clear, easy to understand and measurable, it is important to address emerging and re-emerging challenges including growth and employment, equity, and sustainability issues such as disaster risk reduction, resilience and energy security. The new framework should also aim at poverty eradication with quality growth.

To this end, I believe that human security, which focuses on individuals and emphasizes their protection and empowerment, should

be a guiding principle for the new development agenda.

In addition to accelerating the efforts to achieve the MDGs, Japan would like to cooperate with ACD member countries in the discussion towards formulating the post-2015 development agenda.

Mr. Chair,

Two years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. Japan was extremely moved and encouraged by the tremendous amount of generous assistance it received from all over the world, including ACD member countries. Let me take this opportunity to express once again our heartfelt gratitude for that kindness.

Now it is our turn to be proactive. By utilizing the 3 billion US dollars pledged at the Rio+20 conference, Japan will continue to assist the strengthening of the comprehensive disaster risk reduction capability of developing countries by effectively combining structural and non-structural measures based on human security.

The international community has been making steady efforts in the area of disaster risk reduction since the establishment of the “Hyogo Framework for Action” in 2005. That arrangement will come to the end of its term in 2015 and new guidelines will be discussed at the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015. Japan will host this conference and play a leading role in establishing a truly effective post-Hyogo Framework for Action.

In recent years, the frequency of natural disasters and the level of damage caused by them have been increasing due to climate change and unplanned urbanization. The international community should invest more in disaster risk reduction and mainstream it in development efforts, as the poor and the vulnerable tend to bear the brunt of natural disasters. In this regard, Japan will cooperate with ACD member countries to incorporate the disaster risk reduction element in the post-2015 development agenda so as to draw the attention of the international community to this issue and to mobilize the necessary resources.

Mr. Chair,

Global environmental problems also pose a major challenge for sustainable development in Asia. At Rio+20, Japan announced its “Green Future Initiative” consisting of three pillars, namely the development of environmentally-friendly future-oriented cities around the world, contribution to the global transition to a green economy, and building a resilient society. For the purpose of supporting the global transition to a green economy, Japan organized the new “Green Future Action Corps” and has already sent experts to 50 countries, including ACD members, while promoting cooperation by utilizing its knowledge and technology.

In the past, Japan suffered serious pollution due to lack of consideration for the environment. Based on the experience of the Minamata disease, Japan has actively contributed to the negotiations for the Minamata Convention on Mercury with a view to strengthening

measures against mercury contamination. Following the conclusion of the negotiations in January this year, Japan will host the Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Minamata Convention on Mercury in Kumamoto in October. Japan wishes to continue cooperating with ACD member countries in this field and sincerely hopes that they will attend the conference.

Mr. Chair,

In order to turn the cultural and religious richness and diversity of Asia into a source of energy, we must enhance mutual understanding by promoting exchange in various fields.

In particular, it is crucially important to promote exchange among the younger generation, who will lead our countries in the future. Japan has invited more than 45,000 young people, mainly from East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia, under the umbrella of the project known as the “Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youth (JENESYS)” since 2007. In addition, in January this year Prime Minister Shinzo ABE announced the re-launch of this program as JENESYS 2.0. Under JENESYS 2.0, Japan has begun the process of inviting 30,000 young people from Asian countries.

Japan has developed multilayered partnerships with Asian countries. This year marks the 40th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation. Japan and Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan, celebrated the 20th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic

relations last year, and since then we have steadily strengthened our partnerships, in particular under the framework of the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue.

To promote exchange and dialogue among and beyond such sub-regional frameworks would contribute to strengthening cooperation in this region as a whole. For example, this month Japan organized a symposium on “The role of regional cooperation in trade and investment promotion in Central Asia – lessons learned from ASEAN experiences” under the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue. At the symposium, participants enjoyed an active and useful exchange of views on the challenges for regional cooperation in Central Asia, while taking into consideration the lessons learned from ASEAN’s experience of integration within its own region and Japan’s contribution to it.

In closing, allow me to express my sincere appreciation of the initiative exercised by Kuwait and the role played by Thailand as Coordinator to strengthen the ACD. Japan hopes that the provisional secretariat due to be established in Kuwait will contribute to the further development of the ACD.

Thank you very much.