

Joint Statement between Japan and the Lao People's Democratic Republic

Prime Minister Shinzo ABE of Japan paid an official visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic on 17 November 2013, upon the invitation of Prime Minister Thongsing THAMMAVONG of the Lao People's Democratic Republic. During his visit, Prime Minister ABE and Prime Minister Thongsing held a summit meeting. The two leaders reaffirmed the traditionally friendly relationship between the two countries and shared the view that, in order to further strengthen their "Comprehensive Partnership", Japan and Laos will advance cooperation including in the following areas.

1. Political and Security Issues

Building on Japan's contribution to date for the peace and stability of the region, Prime Minister Abe elaborated his security policy to proactively contribute even further to the peace and stability of the region and the international community from the perspective of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the long-standing principle of international cooperation. Prime Minister Thongsing noted this explanation and appreciated Japan's achievement as a peaceful nation as well as supported Japan's further contribution.

The two leaders agreed to pursue a Japan-Laos politico-military (PM) dialogue, aiming to further enhance cooperation between the two countries.

2. Economic Relations and Development Cooperation

Prime Minister Thongsing appreciated Japan's development cooperation to Laos including through official development assistance, and hoped for continued cooperation. Prime Minister Abe stated that Japan will continue to support efforts by Laos toward its socio-economic development, including infrastructure, agriculture, education, health and women as well as expressed Japan's assistance to the project for the Vientiane International Airport Terminal Expansion Project and Ninth Poverty Reduction Support Operation (PRSO). They also concurred on the importance of steadfast implementation of assistance for development of transportation infrastructure, including the East-West Economic Corridor (EWEC) assisted by Japan, from the perspective of strengthening connectivity in the Mekong region.

The two leaders shared the view that unexploded ordnance (UXO) from the Indochina War period still scattered throughout Laos constitutes an obstacle to Lao economic and social development, and reaffirmed the importance of providing assistance for the removal of UXO.

Prime Minister Thongsing appreciated Japan's cooperation to date in health and medical sector. The two leaders decided to further strengthen cooperation in this

sector.

They welcomed the recent increase of the number of Japanese companies operating in Laos and shared the view that further improvement of investment environment in Laos by using platforms such as the Japan-Lao Public and Private Sectors Joint Dialogue is essential for facilitating more investment. From this perspective, they welcomed the decision on the opening of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) office in Laos.

3. People-to-People and Cultural Exchanges

Prime Minister Abe expressed his intention to conduct exchange projects with approximately 1,500 participants in the next five years, by taking advantage of various exchange programs such as JENESYS 2.0. Prime Minister Thongsing welcomed Japan's initiative.

The two leaders praised the measures taken respectively to ease visa requirements for the nationals of the other country, in order to widen opportunities for people-to-people exchange.

They also decided to make further efforts for generating more demand and improving relevant conditions, including examining possibility to conclude an air services agreement, in order to facilitate direct flight services between the two countries in the future.

They decided to continue to advance exchange and cooperation in the field of arts, culture and sports as well as Japanese language education, in order to further strengthen mutual understanding of both countries.

4. The 60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Laos

As the year 2015 marks the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and Laos, the two leaders reaffirmed that both countries will closely coordinate and cooperate with each other to promote a wide range of exchange between the two countries, including high-level leaders mutual visits.

5. Regional and International Cooperation

They decided to promote further cooperation toward regional and global peace and prosperity.

Prime Minister Thongsing confirmed his participation in the ASEAN-Japan Commemorative Summit and the Mekong-Japan Summit Meeting to be held in December 2013. The two leaders decided to work closely with each other for a successful outcome of these Summits.

They reaffirmed their commitment to maintain world peace and stability as well as to create an environment conducive to international cooperation. As for the Asia-Pacific region, they underscored the importance of the maintenance of peace, stability and prosperity of the region as well as the significance of stability and maritime security including settlement of disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law and the UN charter. They expressed their expectation on an early conclusion on an effective Code of Conduct (COC) which contributes to ensure freedom and safety of sea navigation.

On the Korean Peninsula, they shared the view that maintenance of peace, security and stability is of great importance. In this regard, the two sides called for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. They reaffirmed their commitment to support the full implementation of the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions. They also emphasized the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns, including the abduction issue.

The two leaders shared the view that the UN Security Council should be reformed. Prime Minister Thongsing reiterated the support of Laos for Japan's Permanent Membership in the reformed UN Security Council. Prime Minister Abe expressed gratitude for this continued support of Laos. The two leaders shared the view that they should work together to achieve an early reform of the Council, in view of the 70th anniversary of the United Nations in 2015.

Vientiane

November 17, 2013