

(Provisional translation)

Statement by Mr. Takao Makino
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At the 3rd International Conference on SIDS

Samoa
2 September 2014

Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to visit the Independent State of Samoa for the first time. At the outset, allow me to refer to a familiar song in Japan about Samoa.

“Under the blue sky; the cloudless sky; lie the islands of Samoa; everlasting summer”

These are the opening lyrics of the ‘Song of the Samoan Islands’, which was broadcasted nation-wide on Japanese TV in 1961. The Samoan folk tune, brought to Japan by an anthropologist, has since become known to many Japanese.

These words speak for themselves; Samoa is indeed a beautiful country. It is my great joy to take part in this meeting to which we have all gathered in order to crystalize our collective wisdom for future generations, who will inherit the splendor of the islands.

As Prime Minister Abe announced in Papua New Guinea and Trinidad and Tobago in July, Japan places much value on sustainable development including overcoming vulnerabilities particular to small island states. Of the various challenges that SIDS currently face, Japan regards Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Health as the top three agenda from the perspective of, a human-centered approach.

First, with regard to Climate Change, this is an urgent issue for the future of the small island countries, in particular the Atoll Nations.

Last year, with this acute sense of the impending crisis, Japan provided assistance to SIDS amounting to approximately 300 million US dollars to support their efforts in this field. In addition, just this July in Tokyo, we held a fruitful dialogue among the climate change

negotiators from 21 island countries. We are determined to continue to promote such initiatives in both a material and knowledge-based manner.

Second, natural disasters are a persistent threat to small islands.

The pivot of countermeasures against natural disasters is to invest before they even occur. In this connection, Japan has provided equipment to SIDS for weather-monitoring and tide measurement. We have also undertaken evacuation drills with the local communities. In the months to come, these initiatives will be followed by assistance for concrete mitigation efforts such as radio broadcasting, dispatch of regional experts and introduction of flood hazard maps.

In addition, in March of next year, Japan will host the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in the city of Sendai, which is located within the region struck by the Great East Japan Earthquake. We look forward to high-level participation from SIDS countries in the conference.

Third, when it comes to health, day-to-day prevention and early detection are the key to building and maintaining healthy communities.

Japan takes pride in our Universal Health Coverage (UHC), which provides every person throughout the country with access to essential health services, including various preventive measures. We are prepared to support SIDS in introducing Health Promotion Funds to promote UHC for the people of SIDS.

In addition, Japan will support an expansion of NCDs screening systems.

The key to success in each of these three areas are the ‘actors’ who will actually implement the initiatives.

From this point of view, I hereby announce that Japan will support SIDS through ODA by training 5,000 ‘actors’ over the next three years in a wide range of fields, including the three I already mentioned.

The song I referred to at the beginning ends with the following line, “We will stand together; dance together; our island; joyful island.”

From this day on, as we have done in the past, Japan will think and walk together with our dear SIDS friends.

Thank you for your attention.