

JAPAN-GUAM COOPERATION PROGRAM

1. Background

Japan-GUAM cooperation is based on their common vision and well-rooted traditions. Statutory Documents and Summit Declarations of GUAM are in tune with Japan's basic approaches to regional cooperation in Southeastern Europe, which is creating political stability and economic prosperity, allowing universal values to take hold and establishing a peaceful and promising civil society that enables personal fulfillment.

Since Japan-GUAM cooperation started in 2007, Japan has been supporting the development of GUAM member states, which share fundamental values such as democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, including norms and principles of international law, and market economy. At the first meeting in Baku, both sides expressed their desire and hoped to further enhance dialogue between Japan and GUAM.

Today, both sides are enjoying Japan-GUAM cooperation in the field of mutual interest including tourism, energy, transit and transportation, environmental protection, and trade and investment. There is a strong intention to continue and strengthen dialogue and practical cooperation between Japan and GUAM.

A number of important meetings have taken place, such as the Japan-GUAM ministerial meetings on December 4, 2008 in Helsinki and December 7, 2011 in Vilnius, in the margins of the OSCE ministerial council, and the meetings between the GUAM National Coordinators and Secretary General and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and as well as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Japan in Tokyo within the framework of the 4th and 5th Japan-GUAM meeting.

A number of important bilateral visits between the leaders of Japan and GUAM have taken place in recent years, boosting Japan-GUAM cooperation, and opening a new window of opportunity for both bilateral and multilateral interaction among Japan and GUAM member states. In January 2011, Prime Minister of Japan appraised GUAM as "an important regional mechanism of promoting democracy and economic development, with which Japan maintains dialogue and cooperation within the framework of Japan-GUAM".

A number of important workshops have also been already held, namely: on Energy Saving Technologies (September 16-24, 2007, Tokyo), on Investment and Trade Promotion (February 1-9, 2009, Tokyo), on Tourism Promotion (November 15-23, 2009, Tokyo), on Disaster Management (March 10-18, 2011, Tokyo), on Energy Security (January 15-23, 2012, Tokyo), on Transportation (November 25-30, 2012, Tokyo), on Agriculture (March 10-18, 2013, Tokyo), on Medical Field (February 16-24, 2014, Tokyo) and on Water Management (March 22-30, 2015, Tokyo) which fostered GUAM-Japan cooperation in the spheres of trade and investment, energy, emergency situations, tourism, transport, agriculture, medical care and water management.

2. Outcomes of Cooperation

The following outcomes of Japan-GUAM cooperation have been achieved:

- Development of Japan-GUAM relationship;
- Enhancement of visibility and reputation of GUAM in the international arena;
- Strengthening cooperation in private sector among Japan and GUAM member states;
- Stronger engagement of Japan in GUAM regional cooperation;
- Contribution to better interaction of GUAM member states' public institutions and entrepreneurs; and
- Capacity building in GUAM member states.

3. Goals of Cooperation

Japan has been developing bilateral relations with respective GUAM member states. Japan-GUAM cooperation was established in order to promote democracy and market economies after GUAM became a regional forum. Mutual cooperation among GUAM member states within the regional forum accelerates self-reliant development of each member. In this context, Japan-GUAM cooperation matches one of Japan's basic policies on development cooperation, i.e. "Cooperation aimed at self-reliant development through assistance for self-help efforts as well as dialogue and collaboration based on Japan's experience and expertise".

Four main goals of cooperation will be pursued in the future:

- Consultations on broad range of actual problems of international and regional relations in order to maintain international peace and security on basis of the UN Charter, generally recognized principles and norms of international law, particularly those related to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, with a view to elaborating common approaches, bringing their positions closer and providing support, when deemed useful, to each other's initiatives;
- Development and implementation of programs and projects for practical cooperation between Japan and GUAM;
- Cooperation in the fields of mutual interest where Japan and GUAM can cooperate; and
- Continuation of the dialogue with the goal to advance existing Japan-GUAM format.

4. Instruments of Cooperation

The following five instruments (not an exclusive list) are envisaged to implement this Cooperation Program:

- Japan-GUAM meetings at ministerial level;
- Japan-GUAM National Coordinator meetings;
- Working organs of GUAM with the participation of Japanese experts;
- Ad Hoc expert groups for practical cooperation between Japan and GUAM; and
- Workshops and seminars in the sectors of mutual interest.

5. Areas of Cooperation

Priority list (not exclusive) for Japan-GUAM cooperation includes:

- International and regional relations;
- Tourism;
- Energy;
- GUAM Transport Transit Corridor;
- GUAM Free Trade Area;
- Investment projects;
- Emergency situations and radiological security;
- Infrastructure;
- Disaster Management;
- Environmental Protection;
- Agriculture;
- Medical Care;
- Water Management; and
- Culture.

6. Conclusion

GUAM area in recent years was in the focus of the international community, presenting both challenges and opportunities. In this context, the enhanced Japan-GUAM interaction consists in promoting actions through regional approach, to develop a more stable and prosperous Black Sea-Caspian area. This goal is in full compliance with GUAM Statutory Documents, Summit Declarations, set of priorities of Japan's foreign policy in the region and documents of Japan-GUAM format endorsed so far.

Traditionally, friendly bilateral relationship among all GUAM member states and their excellent individual cooperation with Japan have provided good platform for further Japan-GUAM cooperation which is fruitful and mutually beneficial in various areas, utilizing GUAM institutional and organizational framework as well as unique cooperative opportunities existing in the GUAM area.

Traditions of Japan-GUAM cooperation prove that the enhanced Japan-GUAM partnership and their open and regular dialogue in an institutionalized format have accelerated the implementation of region-wide projects of mutual interest. GUAM will capitalize on this experience, developing cooperation with other partners.

This Cooperation Program should serve as a good platform for further Japan-GUAM interaction in the Black Sea-Caspian area. The shared goal is to ensure the establishment of civilized space of partnership in the region, thus contributing to the strengthening of regional trust and confidence, and leading to the integration and stability of the region.