

モルディブ・パートナーシップ・フォーラム
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First, let me congratulate the government of the Maldives on successfully hosting the Maldives Partnership Forum. And thank you for the opportunity to deliver a speech here today.

This is my second visit to the Maldives as Special Advisor to the Prime Minister. Perhaps more importantly, I have come to Kurumba for the very first time. I am immensely impressed with the beauty of the Maldives and the hospitality of its people.

Last December when the Maldives was embarking on a new chapter in its history under President Solih, I visited the Maldives.

I was heading a delegation of seven ministries and others to share the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, which Japan has been advocating. In the meetings with President Solih and seven ministers, we shared the view on promoting concrete cooperation under the vision. The visit marked a milestone in the evolution of broader bilateral cooperation under the Solih administration.

Maritime nations such as the Maldives and Japan benefit from rules-based free and open sea. And our stability and development cannot be sustained without such sea. Sustainable development of the Maldives, located in the strategic point of Indian Ocean sea lane, drives further regional prosperity.

Based on this recognition, our two countries have been already working for a free and open Indo-Pacific. This includes our initiatives for enhanced connectivity as well as maritime security and safety.

In this light, today, let me address our vision for the future cooperation with a focus on three areas; (1) quality infrastructure investment, (2) building resilient society and (3) blue economy.

(1) Quality infrastructure investment

For realizing prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, connectivity enhancement through quality infrastructure is indispensable.

Today, global demand for infrastructure investment is vast.

Nevertheless, sustainable development is sometimes hindered because of infrastructure investment that does not meet the international standards.

To tackle this challenge, Japan took the lead in endorsing the “G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment” at the G20 Finance Ministers and Central bank Governors Meeting held in Japan last week. The principles highlight openness, transparency, economic efficiency and debt sustainability of borrower countries. We aim to endorse the Principles at the G20 Osaka Summit at the end of this month.

Japan will extend necessary cooperation and capacity building assistance for emerging donors and recipient countries to implement the Principles. As for the Maldives, Japan is now considering dispatching a financial expert on debt sustainability and launching human resource development programs. We expect that these cooperation will contribute to promoting quality infrastructure investment and sustainable development in the Maldives.

(2) Building resilient society

The second focus is building resilient society.

Japan has cooperated with the Maldives in this field through building sea walls in Male and providing fire engines.

Also, Japan has just started developing the Digital Terrestrial Television Broadcasting network equipped with a *tsunami* early warning system.

I could not be happier when I learned that hook and ladder trucks that Japan had provided helped rescue people from the building on fire in Male the other day.

Yesterday, Japan and the Maldives exchanged notes on Japan’s grant aid concerning provision of a fire boat and a landing craft boat which can transfer fire engines from island to island.

This will make it possible to rapidly respond to a fire call and effectively fight the fire in remote islands.

I am confident that this cooperation will help develop the Maldives’ disaster risk management and its maritime safety. And the Maldives can overcome a major challenge

particular to an island nation.

(3) Blue economy

The third focus is the development of blue economy.

When I visited the Maldives last December, our two countries agreed on Japan's grant aid for the provision of oil pollution treatment equipment to the Maldives.

We are convinced that it will help conserve marine environment, believing that beautiful sea is an irreplaceable asset supporting the Maldivian economy.

In this regard, let me introduce a specific example of a Japanese company. This company has been involved in water supply in Male since 2010. This February, they accepted an order for the installation of the desalination facility in Hulhumale Phase 2.

We are keenly aware that providing clean water in remote islands is a priority for the Solih administration. That is why we strongly hope for cooperation of more Japanese companies in addressing the water issue in the Maldives.

I wish to add that another Japanese company was approved in April this year for its direct investment in seafood processing industry in the Maldives.

Building on these concrete projects, Japan will strive to actively promote the larger investments by Japanese companies.

Their technology and knowledge have the enormous potential to contribute to the sustainable socio-economic development of the Maldives.

In closing, I wish to stress that Japan will spare no effort for sustainable socio-economic development of the Maldives.

And we are determined to upgrade Japan-Maldives cooperative relations to greater heights toward the realization of a mutually beneficial free and open Indo-Pacific.

Thank you for your attention.