



Commitment to Accelerate Progress on the MDGs

Wednesday 21st September 2011

13:15-14:30

UN North Lawn Building Conference Room 2



Opening Remarks and the Statement

by H.E. Mr. Koichiro Gamba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am Koichiro Gamba, the newly appointed Foreign Minister of Japan. I feel privileged to be presiding over this meeting.

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to everyone gathered here from around the world at this Side Event on the Millennium Development Goals. On behalf of the co-organizers, I welcome all of you. Let us now commence the meeting.

The UN High-level Plenary Meeting on the MDGs last year was a great success. In order to achieve the MDGs by 2015, it is necessary for the stakeholders to accelerate their efforts with a clear political commitment. To that end, the Government of Japan hosted the MDGs Follow-up Meeting in Tokyo this June.

Today, I would like to share the outcomes of the Tokyo meeting with you. This will be followed by presentations from the representatives of various partner countries and international organizations. That will help us to focus on how to accelerate progress to achieve the MDGs and what the priorities in the remaining period will be.

I hope that this event will stimulate discussions among all of us, and lead to concrete actions for the achievement of our goals.

Now let me report on the outcomes of the MDGs Follow-up Meeting. The meeting was held just three months after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

As the Japanese Foreign Minister, and especially as a person from Fukushima Prefecture, let me thank all of you here for the warm support and compassion extended by the international community. We were tremendously encouraged by your attendance at the Tokyo Meeting.

Over 300 people from 110 countries, 20 regional and international organizations, civil society and the private sector attended the Meeting.

The session concerning the health sector examined Japan's support model for maternal, newborn and child health, called "EMBRACE". During this session, participants recognized the importance of strengthening health systems and addressing the issue of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs).

Participants had a lively discussion concerning how to enhance quality and equity in the education sector. Also, best practice, including Japan's "School for All" model, was shared among the participants.

The discussion moved on to narrowing the implementation gap and addressing bottlenecks on the ground. We renewed our focus on economic growth, which generates wealth. Partnerships among different stakeholders of development are becoming increasingly important.

Throughout the meeting, the participants shared the recognition that individuals should be at the center of development. This is the significance of human security. The collective wisdom expressed at the meeting is documented in the Chair's Statement.

In addition, we kicked off discussions on the international development agenda beyond 2015. Japan will actively take part in the discussions on the Post-MDGs.

I would like to introduce to you one very recent example of Japan's action. This is the case of the partnership between Japan and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to fight polio. Among the four countries that are still suffering from polio, only in Pakistan has the incidence of polio been increasing.

We have decided to provide Pakistan with a loan of approximately 5 billion yen, which is roughly 65 million US dollars, for a large-scale polio eradication program.

The loan is being underpinned by an innovative financing approach: a “Loan Conversion” mechanism. Upon a successful outcome, the Gates Foundation will repay the loan on behalf of the Pakistani Government. This is a very new, highly innovative form of partnership with a private foundation.

Japan is continuing to accelerate its efforts to achieve the MDGs. As the new Foreign Minister of Japan, let me pledge here that Japan will faithfully implement its international commitments.

Thank you very much.

(The MDG logos are designed by Global Call to Action against Poverty - Japan.)