

Opening Remarks by Dr. Kiyohiko Toyama Vice–Minister (Parliamentary) for Foreign Affairs

The 5th Tokyo Workshop on ODA Evaluation

Tokyo, 26 January 2006

Distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to open the Tokyo Workshop on ODA Evaluation. I would particularly like to welcome the representatives of Asian partner countries, bilateral and multilateral development institutions, and thank them for their participation.

Japan is fully committed to support the efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To this end, at the G8 Summit last year, Prime Minister Koizumi announced Japan's intention to increase its ODA volume by US\$ 10 billion in aggregate over the next five years. Many other donor countries also pledged a substantial increase of their ODA. The challenge is to ensure that an increased ODA is implemented in the most effective manner.

Japan has made efforts to improve its ODA through Check and Act to Reform process. From this perspective, Japan attaches special importance to the evaluation of ODA. Evaluation allows us to learn from past successes and failures, and to improve the quality of aid. It also promotes accountability and transparency, which is essential for maintaining the support of the Japanese people for ODA. In concrete terms, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts evaluation at the policy level through a panel of outside experts as well as through joint evaluation with partner countries. At the project level, JBIC and JICA conduct ex-post evaluation for all major projects. In addition, in 2005, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has started to conduct ex-post evaluation for certain grant projects on a pilot basis.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Ownership of the partner countries is critical in order to promote development. In the same vein, developing the capacity of partner countries on evaluation will contribute to more effective use of development resources. That is why Japan has convened four ODA Evaluation Workshops with the participation of Asian partner countries since 2001. These workshops contributed to promoting a better understanding of international evaluation standards and supporting capacity development. Just to cite an example, the last workshop led to the joint evaluation of Japan and

Vietnam on transport development in the Red River Delta area. The joint evaluation was useful not only in raising the quality of evaluation but also in building the evaluation capacity of the Vietnamese counterparts.

Following up on the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness adopted in March of last year, this workshop has a special focus on the "result-based approach". From Japan's own perspective, the significance of the result-based approach is to show the Japanese taxpayers how much ODA is contributing to improvements in the welfare of the people in the developing countries. Since the MDGs have established eight goals focusing on results, it is a common concern for both partners and donors to show achievements of their activities in this results-based framework.

However, as with many other issues, this is easier to be said than done. Moving towards the results-based approach will need to overcome various difficulties relating to methodology and statistics as well as other non-technical issues such as prioritization of development objectives and lack of resources. As an initial effort, Japan is experimentally introducing a matrix of goals in its country assistance programs for Sri Lanka and Pakistan. While Japan is committed to promoting the result-based approach, it is also true that much of the effort remains to be done on the side of the partner countries.

Therefore, it is my sincere hope that there will be very active discussion at this workshop, and moreover, that this workshop will strengthen evaluation of development activities in your respective countries.

Thank you for your attention.