

# Press Release by Prof. Hirono, Chairman of the Tokyo Workshop on ODA Evaluation

7-8 November 2001



Japan hosted the "Tokyo Workshop on ODA Evaluation" on 7-8 November 2001. This was a unique Workshop on evaluation the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted.

Sixty representatives including many senior government officials from fifteen Asian countries, multilateral development agencies and banks (WB, ADB, UNDP and DAC) participated in this Workshop. From Japan, Members of the Diet, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan International Cooperation Agency, Japan Bank for International Cooperation and other government agencies also participated. They met to discuss and share experiences in ODA evaluation, more specifically, evaluation methods, the role of partner countries in evaluation process, capacity building etc.

Not only Japan but also other donor countries are seeking to improve the effectiveness of aid programs and aid policies. The Japanese public asks for increased transparency and accountability. The Japanese public was given a useful opportunity to hear the discussions of the Workshop.

The Workshop participants, recognizing enormous development challenges such as poverty reduction, infectious diseases, conflict prevention etc., shared the view that ODA should continue to play a crucial role to cope with these challenges. They also stressed the importance of evaluation for more effective ODA programs and policies. They also emphasized the critical role of Asian partner countries in evaluation process. They all agreed on the need for strengthening the evaluation capacity of the partner countries.

It was quite useful for Asian participants to exchange views and share experiences on ODA evaluation. The discussion of this Workshop is certainly a beginning of our joint efforts to reach common approaches to effective ODA evaluation and possible evaluation institutional framework.

All Asian partner countries appreciated Japan's initiatives to organize this Workshop. They also welcomed Japan's firm commitment to helping Asian partners' self-help efforts for development through enhanced role of ODA.

Some highlights of their discussions include:

It was generally recognized that present ODA evaluation systems should be further improved to meet the needs of a wide range of stakeholders in donor and partner countries. The importance and usefulness of joint evaluation with partner countries or international development agencies was stressed.

Engaging partner countries in evaluation systems and evaluation feedback process is essential. The need for capacity building in partner countries is crucial. There was a consensus on the need for integrating evaluation feedback into the planning and monitoring programs and strategies in partner countries. This would improve development effectiveness and enhance accountability. The need for establishing and collecting the necessary indicators was also underlined.

In addition to the project-level evaluation, the increased importance of program or policy-level evaluation is shared by many participants. They also recognized the need for strengthening appraisal, monitoring and on-going evaluation process. However, considering the difficulties for program or policy-level evaluation, appraisal and monitoring, they agreed to further discussion on these issues.

Many partner countries proposed to reach common procedures or manuals for ODA evaluation in order to lessen the procedural burden for them.

Many Asian partners suggested that similar workshops should be held involving development agencies and stakeholders including NGOs in the future. In this connection, Japan expressed its willingness to organize a similar ODA evaluation Workshop next year in Tokyo.

Without proper feedback, evaluation loses its life and value. The real value of evaluation should be assessed by the impact it has on the improvement of present programs and on future aid policies.

Japan will report the results of this Workshop to Working Party on Aid Evaluation to be held next week in Paris. A publication with a summary of this Tokyo Workshop will be prepared.

Asian partner's participants will take home the results of the Workshop and do whatever they can to improve their involvement in ODA evaluation process. They are encouraged to report follow-up measures they have taken in the next Workshop.

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