

Joint Statement
"Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue/Foreign Ministers' Meeting
—Relations between Japan and Central Asia as They Enter a New Era—

Astana, August 28, 2004

We, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan held a meeting on August 28, 2004, in Astana, and discussed future cooperation between Japan and Central Asia.

We welcomed that the "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue had been initiated as a new framework for cooperation, thereby elevating relations between Japan and Central Asia to a new level, and shared the following views.

1. Fundamental principles and values

- (1) We shared the view that the peace and stability of the Central Asian region is of a great importance to the stability and prosperity not only for Eurasia but also for the entire international community.
- (2) We appreciated steady progress of cooperative relationship between Japan and Central Asia.
- (3) We shared the view that, based on the friendly relations built up hitherto, mutual cooperation would be further deepened and expanded through ongoing exchanges of views concerning the possibilities for new development of the relationship between Central Asia and Japan, and the means of fostering the relationship.
- (4) Noting that, through assiduous post-independence nation-building efforts made by the Central Asian countries to achieve stability and growth with the aim of realizing democratization and market economies, the Central Asian countries have maintained the stability of the region and have contributed to the peace and stability of Eurasia, we affirmed that for the Central Asian countries it will remain extremely important to continue and further strengthen various efforts to counter terrorism and eradicate poverty, to create free and democratic societies, to achieve stabilization and improvement of people's daily lives through steady

economic growth, as well as to ensure human security. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan expressed Japan's expectations with respect to the further efforts to be made by the Central Asian countries, and reaffirmed its intention to assist the efforts made by each country.

- (5) Noting that the threat of terrorism still remains high in the region, we reiterated the shared view that terrorism cannot be justified for any reason and can never be tolerated. We also reaffirmed the utmost importance of enhancing close international cooperation in this context.
- (6) We stated our intent for Japan and Central Asia to address both regional and global issues as partners.

2. Further deepening and broadening of the relationship between Japan and Central Asia

- (1) We reaffirmed that, given the historical and cultural ties between Japan and Central Asia, there exists a solid foundation for the further developing and deepening of their friendly relations.
- (2) The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan appreciated the nation-building efforts made by the Central Asian countries. The Ministers of the Central Asian countries expressed their gratitude for Japan's assistance, extended hitherto as a part of its "Silk Road diplomacy" that has made an important contribution to the peace, stability and prosperity of their countries.
- (3) Based on the recognition that, in the present international situation, where the Central Asian countries are acquiring greater geopolitical importance, the cooperative relationship between the Central Asian countries and Japan contributes to the peace and stability not only for the Central Asian region but also for the international community as a whole, we expressed our intention to seek further possibilities for cooperation, noting that the cooperation between Japan and the Central Asian countries had been achieved in a number of fields including those set out below;
 - Cooperation for the consolidation of peace
 - Cooperation for economic and social development

- The expansion of economic interaction and the strengthening of the foundations therefor
- Cooperation relating to energy and environmental issues
- Cooperation towards the expansion of cultural exchange
- The facilitation and promotion of human exchanges and human resource development

3. The importance of Intra-regional cooperation within the Central Asian region

- (1) Sharing the recognition that there are a number of challenges in the Central Asian region that all the countries in the region equally face and that are difficult for any individual country to resolve alone, such as terrorism, drugs, transportation, effective use of water and energy resources, trade, protection of environment, we shared the view that effective solutions should be found to these problems in order to achieve peace and stability in Central Asia and to achieve prosperity by realizing the region's economic development potential.
- (2) We further noted that, by the Central Asian countries, deepening their intra-regional cooperation, a market of an economically more viable scale could emerge. For this purposes participants of the meeting have emphasized the importance of implementation of the initiative on gradual creation of a Central-Asian Common market, which will promote more complete use of available potential of the region, its stable development and deepening regional cooperation.
- (3) We recognized that, by establishing solidarity among the Central Asian countries and deepening intra-regional cooperation with a view to addressing the common challenges mentioned above, the entire region could achieve robust growth and prosperity as a coherent and resilient community.
- (4) Sharing the recognition that the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan is essential for the stability and prosperity of the Central Asian region, we expressed our common intention to strengthen cooperation for assisting the realization of the peace and reconstruction of Afghanistan.

- (5) The Ministers of the Central Asian countries expressed their view that, for the aforementioned purposes, the Central Asian countries should take steady and concrete steps for such intra-regional cooperation, in spite of possible initial difficulties.
- (6) The Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan expressed Japan's willingness to support and assist efforts made by the Central Asian countries to cooperate among themselves to address the aforesaid issues.

4. Cooperation in the international arena

- (1) We affirmed that solidarity among the Central Asian countries would not only lead to the growth and prosperity of the region but would also, given the region's geopolitical importance, occupy an important position in the international community.
- (2) We shared the intention that Japan and the Central Asian countries will enhance their cooperation in the international arena, including that within in international organizations, such as the United Nations, and will constructively collaborate to resolve issues which have international dimensions.
- (3) We confirmed that the core of the United Nations reform, and particularly of the Security Council reform, is the expansion in both permanent and non-permanent categories of the Security Council. The Ministers of the Central Asian countries further expressed their expectation that Japan would play more political roles in the international community, and expressed their unanimous support for Japan's permanent membership in the Security Council.

5. The "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue

- (1) We affirmed that, in pursuing further cooperation between the Central Asian countries and Japan, the "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue initiated at this meeting will proceed in accordance with the basic principles set out below.
 - Respect for diversity
 - Competition and coordination
 - Open cooperation

(2) We affirmed that the following objectives will be pursued through this dialogue.

- The strengthening of peace, stability, and democracy in the Central Asian region
- The strengthening of the region's economic foundations, the promotion of reform and the social development of the region, including the correction of intra-regional disparities
- The strengthening of intra-regional cooperation by the Central Asian countries
- The maintenance and development of good relations between Central Asia and neighboring regions as well as with the international community
- Cooperation between Japan and Central Asia with respect to both regional issues and issues having international dimensions.

(3) We shared the recognition that cooperation under this Dialogue will assist Central Asia's voluntary efforts and will contribute to increasing the region's economic resilience, to assuring the stability and development of the region, and to further strengthening the solidarity among the countries of the region.

6. Promoting future dialogue and communication

(1) We shared the view that the basis of the relationships between Japan and the Central Asian countries should be strengthened further by promoting broad-ranging human exchanges, including those among the youth generation.

(2) We shared the view that the "Central Asia + Japan" Dialogue would be pursued at various levels. We shared the view that "the 2005 World Exposition in Aichi, Japan" could provide an important opportunity in this regard.

August 28, 2004

Mrs. Yoriko Kawaguchi
Minister for Foreign Affairs
Japan

Mr. Kassymzhomart Tokaev
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Kazakhstan

Mr. Askar Aitmatov
Minister of Foreign Affairs
The Kyrgyz Republic

Mr. Talbak Nazarov
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Tajikistan

Mr. Sodiq Safaev
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Republic of Uzbekistan

This document is an appendix to and forms part of the Joint Statement of the “Central Asia + Japan” Dialogue/Foreign Ministers’ Meeting. While giving examples of cooperation hitherto and issues and other matters to address in each field, this document has been prepared to serve as a reference for studying the forms that future cooperation may take as Japan and the countries of Central Asia engage in cooperation to further deepen and broaden their relationship and to contribute to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Central Asian region and in turn of the entire international community.

1. Cooperation for consolidation of peace

(1) Counterterrorism measures

- In order to foster international cooperation in counterterrorism measures, in March 2003 Japan hosted the Asia Counterterrorism Conference in Tokyo (to which officials involved in counterterrorism in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan were invited).
- The control of international borders by individual countries constitutes an important element in the strengthening of counterterrorism measures.
- As part of its efforts to support the improvement of capabilities to combat terrorism, Japan actively accepts trainees from countries around the world in the following six fields: measures to combat the financing of terrorism, immigration control, aviation security, customs cooperation, export control, and cooperation with police and law enforcement agencies. (In fiscal 2003, Japan accepted a total of about 280 trainees, including 67 from Central Asia.)
- Japan is able to cooperate in enhancing the capabilities of key personnel through these kinds of training programs and to provide cooperation through the holding of seminars to promote the exchange of information among experts from each country. For three years starting this year, Japan plans to hold an annual seminar on the judiciary system and to accept crime prevention specialists from the Central Asian countries as trainees.

(2) Afghanistan

- The situation in Afghanistan is exerting a major impact on the stability of Central Asia.
- Under the concept of Consolidation of Peace assistance to all the areas at the peace process, Japan has provided assistance to Afghanistan totaling about US\$800 million, covering improvement of security, such as, DDR, and the reconstruction such as transportation infrastructure.
- The Central Asia countries and Japan will continue to provide their assistance to the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan and the creation of a unified state through a democratic process in Afghanistan.

(3) Small arms and light weapons

- Japan sponsored the Regional Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons in March 2004 in Almaty, Kazakhstan, with the United Nations. (The costs of holding the conference were covered through for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities Trust Fund which was contributed by Japan.)
- Japan has played a leadership role to date in the issue of small arms and light weapons.
- To consolidate peace in Central Asia and to counter terrorism, Japan is ready to provide cooperation for the steady implementation of UN Plan of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects and for the strengthening of systems for the control of such SALWs.

(4) Anti-personnel landmines

- To realize a universal and effective ban on landmines and to strengthen mine clearance and victim assistance, Japan has been actively working on the issue of anti-personnel landmines under the Zero Victim Program.
- The First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention will be held in Nairobi at the end of November 2004 and will be a key opportunity to promote the universal adoption of the Convention and to enhance the momentum to resolve landmine problems.
- In April 2004, Japan provided financial support in excess of US\$250,000 for the OSCE landmine clearance project in Tajikistan.

- Japan makes annual contributions (US\$430,000 in 2003, making Japan the second largest donor in term of total contributions) to the Voluntary Trust Fund For Assistance in Mine Action, which is managed and operated by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), and has experience in implementing mine action projects in regions throughout the world in cooperation with the UN using funds that draw on those contributions.

(5) Denuclearization

- Japan has contributed US\$16 million (¥1,770 million) to the Committee on Cooperation for the Destruction of Nuclear Weapons reduced in the Republic of Kazakhstan and assisted the Republic of Kazakhstan in the establishing a state system for nuclear material accountancy and control and taking measures to address the radioactive contamination of the area surrounding the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. In addition, in respect of assistance for the region surrounding the test site, Japan held an aid conference in Tokyo in 1999 and has also provided assistance in such forms as the dispatch of experts and the provision of medical supplies as part of its ODA to that nation.
- Japan remains ready to continue its support for denuclearization.

2. Cooperation for economic and social development

(1) Bilateral economic cooperation by Japan

- Japan has hitherto provided assistance to the countries of Central Asia totaling approximately US\$2.36 billion (approx. ¥ 260 billion), principally for socio-economic infrastructure development, BHN assistance, and human-resource development. (This has included the acceptance of approximately 2,600 trainees and the dispatch of approximately 1,100 experts and volunteers.)
- Japan plans to accept about 1,000 trainees from the Central Asian region over the next three years.
- Based on each nation's demand for aid, Japan is ready to continue to extend bilateral cooperation to support nation-building efforts that the Central Asian nations perform under the concept of ownership.

(2) Assistance for cross-border regional cooperation

- Japan is ready to study the provision of all possible assistance for the efforts of the Central Asian countries to address issues that are common to the entire region, such as terrorism, drugs, transportation, water, energy, the environment, and trade barriers.
- In the provision of ODA, Japan will take into consideration the ways in which any relevant project will benefit the region as a whole.
- Japan plans to conduct an annual training program in water-quality monitoring for three years starting from this year and to accept water specialists from the Central Asian nations as trainees.
- It is important to use completed aid projects, such as the rehabilitation of airports (in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan) and roads (Bishkek–Osh Road), so that they benefit regional cooperation.
- As part of its technological cooperation, Japan invites energy, environment, and water specialists from the Central Asian nations to Japan and conducts “region-focused training courses by fields” in each of these fields. (A total of 25 trainees were received from the Central Asian region in fiscal 2003.) These “region-focused training courses by fields” contribute to the exchange of information among experts in the region, the creation of forums for the exchange of information, and the creation of networks among the experts.

(3) The development of a framework for the smooth implementation of economic cooperation

- Hitherto, agreements have been reached between Japan and many countries of the Central Asian region for grant aid for grass-roots projects, and Japan has encouraged the conclusion of technical cooperation agreements with individual countries in the region.
- Japan will continue to provide cooperation for the development of frameworks to facilitate the implementation of technical assistance and other forms of economic cooperation for recipient countries.

(4) The correction of regional disparities that arise in the course of economic development

- In order to correct regional disparities, Japan has hitherto provided cooperation principally in the form of grant aid or of grant aid for grass-roots projects directed at fragile areas, such as rural districts.
- In light of the deterioration of the care environment in which children are being raised in the Central Asian region due to poverty,

Japan decided on August 20 to implement, with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), a child protection program (US\$2.16 million) through the Trust Fund for Human Security in all five Central Asian countries over a period of three years.

- To date (through 2003), Japan has implemented about 248 grass-roots grant aid projects, including rehabilitating elementary schools and providing equipment to hospitals, throughout Central Asia.
- It is important for the Central Asian region as a whole to undergo balanced economic development, and it is also essential for each individual country to be concerned about disparities among its own domestic regions as well as those among the countries.

(5) Collaboration and cooperation with international financial institutions and related international institutions

- In addition to bilateral ODA, Japan has also provided assistance to Central Asia totaling as much as US\$88 million (1999-2004) through the Japan Trust Funds at the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). (Total assistance amounts for US\$ 88 million since 1999.)
- Collaboration with international financial institutions and related international institutions is important for ensuring the efficient implementation of assistance.

3. The expansion of economic interaction and the strengthening of the foundations therefor

(1) The establishment of legal and other systems and the increase in the transparency of their operations

- Based on institutional development such as the evolution of laws in the course of more than 10 years of nation-building, it will be important for each country to further raise its level of trust by increasing the degree of transparency with which each country operates its systems. Japan is ready to assist by means of technical cooperation and intellectual support. In addition to accepting many trainees in such economy-related fields as business management, project finance, and marketing, Japan cooperates in capacity building by holding seminars related to economics at Japan Centers.

- Japan welcomes and supports Central Asian nations' efforts toward WTO accession. Japan supports such accession by dispatching specialists and accepting trainees.
- Japan welcomes the fact that Kazakhstan's bilateral market access negotiations with Japan in goods for its WTO membership reached a substantive conclusion in July 2004. Japan looks forward to the Central Asian countries' further efforts to realize WTO accession.

(2) Information exchanges to invigorate economic interchange

- The volume of trade between the entire Central Asian region and Japan increased more than fivefold, from approximately US\$84 million in 1992, to approximately US\$450 million in 2003.
- Information exchanges constitute an important element in the invigoration of economic interchange between Japan and each country of the region, and there is scope for further effort to make these exchanges more close and frequent.
- It is important for each Central Asian country to make efforts to ensure that, through the use of embassies and Japan Centers, economic information concerning its own country and other countries is transmitted promptly to the government, companies, and people of other countries.

(3) The nurturing of small and medium-sized enterprises and supporting industries to upgrade the level of the regional economy

- The nurturing of small and medium-sized enterprises and supporting industries by each country is important for promoting and developing a market economy.
- Japan has provided cooperation by such means as dispatching economic advisers and other experts and by accepting trainees, and through the holding of seminars and business matching via embassies, JICA, Japan Centers, and other organizations. Japan will continue to seek methods of cooperation with each nation.

(4) The development of the tourism sector in the region and the promotion of tourism

- The distance between Central Asia and Japan has been shortened by cooperation in the rehabilitation and improvement of airports through Japan's assistance, by the inauguration of direct flights, and by the conclusion of aviation agreement.

- Given the Central Asian region's historical heritage and abundant natural resources, there is a potential need to assist countries to base their economies on tourism. A possible approach is for the countries of the region to cooperate in accordance with a concept of Silk Road tourism development, aiming to make the region a center of international tourism.
- It is important that the countries of the region endeavor to promote tourism from elsewhere within Asia and from other regions such as Europe and North America and seek cooperation in human-resource development for the tourism industry. In October 2003, Japan invited young people in the tourism industry from the Central Asian nations to Japan.

4. Cooperation relating to energy and environmental issues

(1) Energy development

- The petroleum and gas resource of the countries neighboring the Caspian Sea are growing in importance.
- International energy demand is expected to rise, particularly in Asian countries, such as China and India, and the diversification of supply sources to meet that demand is an issue to be addressed.
- Market globalization is advancing, and the stability of the international energy market is essential. In view of this, the stable supply of energy resources from the Central Asian region is becoming increasingly important.
- Attention should be paid to develop the region's energy resources, to efficiently use energy, and to achieve sustainable, environmentally friendly growth.
- Japan has accepted trainees from the Central Asian countries for its energy-related training programs held annually since 2002 and presented Japan's energy use situation and energy-saving efforts.

(2) The environmental field

- The compatibility of economic development and the environment is an important issue.
- Japan has experience with such problems as pollution and environmental contamination and has developed know-how in enhancing legal and other systems in the environmental field.

- For two years starting from 2004, Japan plans to implement a training program on environmental administration and to accept environmental specialists from the Central Asian countries as trainees.

(3) Cooperation to ensure efficient energy use

- It is important to seek out ways of energy use from which the countries of Central Asia can derive mutual benefit.
- Japan is ready to provide details of its own experience of energy-saving.
- Japan anticipates being able to cooperate with the Central Asian countries pursuant to the Kyoto Protocol regarding, for example, Joint Implementation and Clean Development Mechanisms.

5. Cooperation towards the expansion of cultural interchange

(1) Bilateral cultural interchange

- To promote culture and higher level of education, Japan has provided the Central Asian countries with cultural assistance totaling US\$10 million, including the supply of audio and audiovisual equipment, materials for Japanese language learning and for conserving their cultural heritage. In addition, activities to introduce Japan have been conducted in every country of the region.
- The number of people learning the Japanese language is increasing rapidly in Central Asia, the total currently approximating 4,000.
- Japan is ready to continue its cooperation in the cultural sphere, in order to deepen the relationship between Central Asia and Japan.

(2) Promotion of mutual understanding

- There is room for greater effort by Japan and the countries of Central Asia to foster mutual understanding by means of cultural interchange.
- Use of the Internet and the mass media is particularly important in the direct provision of information to citizens, and Japan stands ready to cooperate by means of technical assistance in the IT field and the supply of television programs.

(3) Promotion of world dialogue

- Japan and Central Asia have played important roles throughout history in the exchange between the civilizations of East and West and will cooperate to make a positive contribution to the world dialogue that humanity will need in the future.

6. The facilitation and promotion of exchange programs and human-resource development

- Wide-ranging exchange programs and human-resource development, including in the fields referred to above, will support the nation-building efforts of the Central Asian countries and will strengthen the cooperative relationship between Japan and Central Asia, thereby enhancing the friendly relations and a sense of affinity between the people on both sides.