

Statement by Mr. Kentaro Sonoura
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan
At Second UN Conference on Landlocked Developing
Countries,
4 November 2014

Mr. President, fellow delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this highly important conference to discuss the development of Landlocked Developing Countries, or “LLDCs.” I would also like to extend my gratitude to the Austrian government for their dedicated efforts in hosting this conference.

Mr. President,

Access to global markets is essential for the growth of LLDCs. This is also evident from the experience of Japan, which has a long history of strengthening its ties with the world through trade, and from the experience of the Asian region, which has demonstrated a high growth rate in recent years.

Developing countries are currently attracting attention as new markets and destinations for investment, and are increasing its share in world trade. Participation in the global value chain creates benefits such as the creation of jobs and highly developed industry, and can act as an effective means of growth. Japan is actively utilizing its ODA to ensure growth led by private capital in LLDCs.

Mr. President,

Japan has worked hand-in-hand with LLDCs over the years. Infrastructure development and trade facilitation, which were identified as priority areas in the Almaty Programme of Action are areas in which Japan holds its strongest expertise.

In Africa, Japan has assisted the introduction of One-Stop Border Posts, or “OSBPs,” in 14 locations on national borders in Africa, and is providing support for human resources development to speed-up customs procedures. For example, the time required for customs clearance at the Chirundu-border-point on the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe was shortened from four to five days to a few hours.

In the Mekong region, Japan is pursuing initiatives based on “Tokyo Strategy 2012,” which defines the objectives for cooperation between Japan and the Mekong region until 2015. These initiatives aim to strengthen the Mekong region by enhancing regional connectivity, in preparation for the formation of the ASEAN Community. We will continue to support efforts such as implementing public- private cooperation, and the development of economic corridors and smart networks.

In Central Asia, we will strengthen our cooperation in the agricultural sector, based on the joint declaration made at the Fifth Foreign Ministers’ meeting of the “Central Asia plus Japan” Dialogue held in July this year. This cooperation includes the development of industries which process agricultural and livestock products to create high added-value.

We will also continue to support the development of human resources in the Mekong region and Central Asia which are transitioning to a market-oriented-economy. Through the “Japan Centers for Human Resources Development” established in countries such as Mongolia, Laos, Uzbekistan, the Kyrgyz Republic, and Kazakhstan, we will continue to contribute to human resource development which draws on Japan’s experience of post-war economic growth.

By pursuing such initiatives, Japan will continue to coordinate with LLDCs, transit developing countries, and development partners, to improve the comprehensive logistic environment by creating broader economic zones for both hard and soft infrastructure. We will also respect the autonomy of LLDCs and support processes toward their independence and prosperity.

Mr. President,

Japan will continue to be a dynamic and dependable partner for LLDCs in the future. This conference is the beginning of a new decade towards a bright future for LLDCs. The development of a country is for the sake of each and every citizen living there. In addition to providing support to solve the challenges facing LLDCs through the initiatives I mentioned today, Japan will also make comprehensive use of a broad range of ODA to improve the livelihood of people in developing countries, including measures to tackle poverty and disease and to develop infrastructure to support daily living. We will continue to work together with LLDCs toward their growth and development.

I would like to conclude by saying that I hope this conference will act as a forum for open-minded discussion and be a productive and successful experience for all participating.

Thank you very much for your time and your attention.