

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Koichiro Gemba, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan

July 8, 2012, Tokyo

Your Excellency Mr. Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and gentlemen,

The Tokyo Conference, at the end of a series of international conferences which began in Bonn last year, will serve as a wrap-up of international discussions on Afghanistan this year. Building on the discussions on security and regional cooperation at the NATO Chicago Summit, the RECCA meeting in Dushanbe and the Heart of Asia Meeting in Kabul, we, in Tokyo, must indicate a path to sustainable development in Afghanistan after 2014 in a concrete manner in order to demonstrate that Afghanistan will be stable and can develop itself even after 2014.

To this end, Afghanistan and the international community have had considerable discussion since I visited Kabul in January. In this conference, I hope to establish the "Tokyo Framework," as a framework of mutual commitments for a long-term partnership between Afghanistan and the international community during the "Transformation Decade."

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Afghan government will commit to faithfully implement its growth strategy and improve governance in specific areas. To reciprocate this commitment, the international community will commit to specific assistance for the Afghan's growth strategy. This is the Tokyo Framework. In addition, a follow-up mechanism at the ministerial and working levels will be established so that the mutual commitments will be implemented without fail. Japan will continue to be actively engaged in this Tokyo Process.

At the moment, the Afghan government, under the leadership of President Hamid Karzai, began important reforms efforts for improvement of governance including electoral reforms, anti-corruption measures and enhancement of administrative capabilities of the central and local governments. Japan highly values such efforts by Afghanistan and strongly hopes that the Afghan government will continue to make tangible progress in improving the human right situation including women's rights, governance and other areas in the Process.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the Tokyo Conference in January 2002, Japan has been playing a leading role in assisting development of Afghanistan as the second largest donor next to the United States. This role has been demonstrated by around 3.3 billion dollars of assistance that Japan has provided until the end of 2011 in the areas such as the political process, infrastructure, basic human needs, development of agriculture and rural villages, and culture.

Building on our experience, I announce that Japan will provide up to around three billion dollars of assistance to Afghanistan in about five years from 2012 in the field of socio-economic development and enhancement of security capabilities. Specifically, Japan will assist Afghanistan in three priority areas of economic social development based on Afghanistan's development strategy. First, we will support the agricultural sector in which approximately 80 percent of the Afghan labor force is engaged. Second, we will work on infrastructure development which is important from various perspectives including regional cooperation. Third, we will focus on human resources development, which is the very basic of nation-building. From this perspective, Japan intends to implement training programs for 500 Afghan officials in the coming five year, which will also contribute to improvement in governance. Japan will also continue to support education, which is essential as Afghan people respect their own culture and build a nation with a sense of identity. Japan will continue to provide contribution to the Afghan-led nation-building even after 2017 through assistance in these areas.

Strengthening regional cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbors is essential for stability in Afghanistan in the mid to long term. Enhancing regional cooperation is crucial for Afghanistan to make the most of its geopolitical advantage as a bridge of the center of the Eurasian continent and achieve sustainable development by attracting private sector investment. For regional cooperation, Japan is implementing projects worth around 1 billion dollars in neighboring countries such as Pakistan and Central Asia. Through these projects, Japan will assist construction of a corridor across Afghanistan, which runs across Central Asia to Karachi, Pakistan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Roles of the civil society are essential in reconstruction and development of Afghanistan. Representatives from the Afghan civil society are present at today's conference so as to reflect ideas on the ground. Japan will continue to work closely with the civil society with a view to effectively providing its assistance to the Afghan people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, Afghanistan and the international community will start a partnership with financial backing under the new "Tokyo Framework." Let me conclude by expressing my strong hope that the new partnership between Afghanistan and the international community formed here in Tokyo, will lead to the transformation and sustainable development of Afghanistan.

Thank you very much