

The 11th Round Table Meeting for Bhutan
(1-2 September, 2011, Thimphu)
Statement by Mr. Shuichi Tokuda
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Mr. Chairman, Hon'ble Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba, Minister of Works and Human Settlement, Kingdom of Bhutan,

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ajay Chhibber, UN Assistant-Secretary General, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director, Asia and the Pacific,

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great honor to be given an opportunity to address this Round Table on behalf of the Government of Japan. First of all, I would like to express my sincerest gratitude for the support we have received from the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan as well as many other countries and international organizations after the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 11. The government of Japan is making every effort for the reconstruction and recovery from this earthquake.

I also take this opportunity to express my respects to the Royal Government of Bhutan for its strong ownership aiming at further promotion of the 10th Five Year Plan. We appreciate the Royal Government of Bhutan for its achievement in the continuous economic growth, elevation of living-standards and the improvement of primary education as well as maternal and child health; these achievements are the fruits of its development efforts. The Government of Japan hopes that the Royal Government of Bhutan will steadily implement the 10th Five Year Plan in coordination with other development partners, based on the proactive discussions held during these two days.

This year, the Kingdom of Bhutan and Japan marks the 25th anniversary of its establishment of diplomatic relations. The two countries enjoy historically cordial and friendly relations with high-level exchange of visits. Those include visits between the Bhutanese Royal Family and Japanese Imperial Family. Japan began its economic cooperation to the Kingdom of Bhutan with the dispatch of an agricultural expert, Mr. Keiji Nishioka, who was bestowed the title of “Dasho”, by His Majesty the King of Bhutan. Successful results of our economic cooperation were witnessed, particularly in the agriculture and rural development sectors. Moreover, Japan, as one of the main donors, has supported its self-help efforts Bhutan has made in the elevation of living-standards, the development of the socio-economy and the democratization.

Chairmen,

In order to support steady progress in the implementation of the 10th Five Year Plan, the Government of Japan has extend grant aid of up to about 1 billion Japanese yen for the restoration and construction of 5 vital bridges against Cyclone disasters (The project for Restoration and Improvement of Vital Infrastructure against Cyclone Disaster). Japan will implement in conjunction with this grant aid a technical cooperation project to assist in the development of Bhutanese human resources in areas such as design, construction and maintenance of farm-road bridges.

Also, in order to contribute to the realization of Bhutan’s “Electricity for all by 2013”, Japan has decided this June to provide a ODA Loan amounting up to 2.18 billion Japanese yen, for “Rural Electrification Project(Phase 2)” , following its phase 1 project amounting up to 3.57 billion Japanese yen extended in 2007. Moreover, in March 2011, Japan has provided power tillers that are suited to cultivate the mountainous areas of Bhutan (Grant Aid for Underprivileged Farmers (2KR)), aiming at promoting modernization

and productivity increase in agricultural sector. For the promotion of improving medical services, Japan has decided to provide grant aid to replace of the 26 decrepit ambulances (The Project for replacement of Ambulances). Tomorrow, Japan will hand over 4 fire engines to the Royal Bhutan Police Headquarters to support Bhutan's social development (The Project for Supply of Fire Engines). Japan hopes that the Kingdom of Bhutan will make the most of our economic cooperation by Bhutan's initiative, contributing to further elevation of living standards.

Chairmen and distinguished development partners,

Respecting Bhutan's National Development Plan based on the basic principles of Gross National Happiness, Japan continues to support Bhutan with a prime focus on the elevation of living-standards of the people of the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Since disparity gap between the urban and rural areas is becoming elicit, Japan attaches high importance to the efforts for consolidation of good livelihoods in the rural areas through increasing agricultural productivity and facilitating access to markets, which will lead to further elevation of living standards.

Japan sincerely hopes that persistent efforts by the Royal Government of Bhutan and continuous cooperation by development partners will continue toward the goals of Bhutan 2020 and the 10th Five Year Plan.

Thank you for your attention.