



ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. NAOTO KAN
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL REVIEW MEETING ON
THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MAURITIUS STRATEGY FOR THE
FURTHER IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ACTION
FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF
SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES

24 September 2010
New York

Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a pleasure for me to have had the opportunity today to meet and speak in person with so many leaders of small island developing States (SIDS), as Japan has created partnerships with SIDS in a wide range of fields. I would like to express renewed respect to your leadership, Mr. President, for giving me such an occasion to speak.

As you are aware, Japan is an island country consisting of four major islands and more than six thousand eight hundred islets. Japan is located in a disaster-prone area, and is a country which bears the brunt of typhoons every year and is hit by frequent earthquakes. We Japanese experience terror and misery caused by natural disasters and have struggled to overcome them for many years. Therefore, we understand the problems SIDS are facing as if they are our own. Japan would like to help the people of SIDS who strive to overcome their particular vulnerabilities while at the same time valuing the beautiful scenery, the blessings of bountiful oceans, unique biodiversity and indigenous cultures. So today I would like to touch upon such efforts Japan has made, with particular emphasis on measures relating to natural disasters and climate change. I also wish to reaffirm our determination to achieve progress on this issue.

Mr. President,

Many SIDS are located in disaster-prone areas and continue to be wracked by earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes and other natural calamities. The enormous earthquake in Haiti in January only serves to remind us of the magnitude of the damage caused by natural disasters, with a huge number of human lives lost and the collapse of its basic infrastructure. Immediately after the earthquake, Japan dispatched Disaster Relief Teams to the stricken area, followed by a Japan Self Defense Force (SDF) engineer unit, which was sent to assist the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. The SDF unit remains in Haiti, engaging in the work of reconstruction, including removal of debris and road repairs. Japan continues to provide maximum assistance for Haiti's reconstruction.

I would like to touch upon disaster risk reduction. For SIDS who are facing various natural disasters, it is essential that risk reduction measures be adopted that minimize the damage natural disasters cause. Efforts to build a society of safety and resilience at the national and community levels is important. Japan will therefore offer support for the efforts of SIDS in the areas of institution-building and human resource development, based on its extensive experience and expertise in the area of disaster risk reduction.

Mr. President,

SIDS are particularly vulnerable to climate change. The rise in the sea level is a serious challenge, and in many instances, a threat to their very existence. Japan has been deeply moved by the urgent appeals of these island States and believes that the serious threat that climate change poses should be eliminated. To that end, it is essential for the international

community to take action and stop the progression of global warming. We must establish a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies participate. It hardly needs to be pointed out that SIDS need such a framework even more desperately than other countries do. For its part, Japan will cooperate with SIDS to ensure the success of COP16, which will be held in Mexico at the end of this year.

Mr. President,

In the spirit of partnership, Japan attaches importance to engaging in dialogue with SIDS so that the assistance it provides will accord with their individual needs and priorities. Thus it has been extending assistance for the self-help efforts of Pacific island countries, and it has hosted the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting five times since 1997. Next month in Tokyo, Japan will host an Interim Ministerial Meeting in preparation for the sixth Leaders Meeting in 2012. Also in Tokyo, on the 2nd of September, Japan and CARICOM member States held the second Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference and agreed to further enhance our partnership. Finally, Japan has been providing assistance for SIDS in Africa, taking care that their specific needs are reflected in the measures implemented as part of the TICAD process.

Japan places the concept of human security at the heart of this cooperation and dialogue with SIDS. Japan aims for assistance which enables all the people in SIDS to live with dignity. Human security has as its focus individual human beings, who are seriously affected by the wide range of issues—the environment, health, education--that are confronting small island developing States. And it places the importance of addressing those issues comprehensively, promoting active cooperation among governments, local authorities, international organizations, NGOs and private institutions.

Mr. President,

Small island countries have inherited from their ancestors breath-taking and wonderful nature, a long history and traditional culture. It is important to solve the problems SIDS faces while succeeding such great legacies to future generations. In order to help such efforts, Japan will continue to be a firm supporter of all small island developing States.

Thank you for your attention.