

Statement by Ambassador Hiroshi Takahashi
At the 6th Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on
Afghanistan

September 3-4, 2015

Distinguished heads of delegations

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, let me express congratulations, and great respect to the efforts of the Government of Afghanistan for hosting the RECCA VI.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I honestly believe that an Afghanistan with stable security and well-developed economy will become a core of stable distribution in the region and enable the regional countries to make the most of their own fortune. However, in order to reach this goal, international cooperation, especially regional cooperation is indispensable on top of Afghanistan's own efforts.

Afghanistan is rich in agricultural and mineral resources and has a further potential, but they hit various obstacles and are not fully utilized its potential due to the various difficulties. Many of those obstacles, however, can be overcome through cooperating of the international community as well as the countries in the region.

The underdeveloped transportation infrastructure both within and outside Afghanistan is one of such obstacles. Japan intends to support the efforts to improve inter-connectivity of the region based on the belief that infrastructure development is a field in which Japan can make the best of its resources and knowledge.

Cross-border illegal activities are jeopardizing security and impeding business activities. Japan has been providing assistance for border control, under the assessment that appropriate border control prevents illegal activities such as drug trafficking while enhancing business activities.

In the region where fast-flowing rivers stride over the international borders, regional cooperation is required for disaster management as well. From this perspective, Japan has been working hand in hand with Afghanistan and its neighbors. Also, Japan has been contributing to the development of agriculture and stockbreeding in Afghanistan and the neighboring countries, through assistance to the projects for enhancing control of trans-boundary animal diseases, such as Foot-and-Mouth Disease.

Drawing upon our unique strength, Japan will continue to provide assistance to Afghanistan and regional countries, so that Afghanistan can take advantage of its geographic characteristics and contribute to the regional development as the hub of commodity and energy distribution and passenger transport that stretches out in all directions. Furthermore, Japan intends to encourage cooperation among regional countries in tackling common threats and dangers through such assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is also necessary that Afghanistan and each country in the region make further efforts. In order to rein in rampant internal violence and to prevent its spreading across the border,

Afghanistan needs to develop its human resources, enact domestic legislation and encourage its industries. By providing assistance that amounts to approximately 5.8 billion US dollars since 2001, Japan has been supporting Afghanistan's efforts to realize self-reliance in both security and economy through such areas of agriculture, and rural development, infrastructure, capacity building of police and justice sectors as well as development of human resources.

We, Japan, call on Afghanistan and its neighbors for further cooperation in various fields including economy and security. As one of the major donors in the region, Japan is determined to continue its support to the constructive efforts by Afghanistan and its neighboring countries.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

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