



Permanent Mission of Japan to the International Organizations in Vienna

Statement by Mr. Shintaro ITO, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan
On the Occasion of the High-Level Segment of 52nd Commission on Narcotic Drugs
12 March 2009

Madam Chairperson,
Distinguished Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, allow me to highly commend Madam Chairperson, Vice Prime Minister of Namibia, for her leadership and to express my appreciation for the contributions by the UNODC and the INCB to this High-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which allows us the opportunity to conduct the review of targets set at the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1998.

As you know, in spite of our efforts over the last ten years to combat illicit drugs, there are still many problems to be solved such as the spread of opium from Afghanistan, the diffusion of cannabis containing high levels of THC (tetra hydrocannabinol), and the increase in drug trafficking through Africa. These problems continue to pose serious threats to all human beings.

Madam Chairperson,

Japan, having given high priority to anti-drug measures in our development assistance policy and also from a human security perspective, has actively supported largely Asian countries over the decade. One focus has been on the Golden Triangle, which in 1998 was the biggest opium producing area in the world. Over the past decade the cultivation area has been reduced by 80%. Japan believes that its alternative development assistance has significantly contributed to this success.

Domestically, Japan has adopted a national strategy every 5 years since 1998 and has strictly implemented drug abuse prevention measures based on those plans. As a result, Japan maintains one of the lowest prevalence rates of drug abuse in the world. Last year an INCB mission dispatched to Japan highly praised our actions.

Madam Chairperson,

I would like to stress the need for the international community to tackle the problem of illicit drugs by reaffirming a course of action based on the concept of “shared responsibility”.

There are different aspects of drug control: the drug producers, drug consumers and drug traffickers. While each country may have set different priorities to cope with these aspects, no country can afford to be indifferent to these problems.

In the first place, every country has to strengthen domestic counter-measures in response to its national situation. Drug producing countries should promote alternative income generating activities, drug-consuming countries should reduce the demand for drugs by raising public awareness and implementing other preventative measures, and transit countries should strengthen law enforcement in order to cut off drug smuggling routes.

At the same time, it is crucial for donor countries to provide afflicted countries with effective assistance, by taking advantage of their own experience and expertise.

Madam Chairperson,

As a drug-consuming country, Japan will further promote national drug abuse prevention measures and continue to foster international cooperation utilizing our experience and knowledge mainly in the following three areas.

Economic and social instability rooted in poverty causes the spread of illicit drug production and cultivation. Therefore, Japan, firstly, will strengthen support for rural and agricultural development assistance as a means of alternative income generating activities, as it is doing now in Afghanistan.

Secondly, Japan has accumulated its experience in combating the abuse of synthetic drugs since World War II, and for many years has ensured that effective controls are in place. Japan has been providing assistance in fighting synthetic drugs to mostly Asian countries, and is willing to further extend its cooperation in order to accelerate international action in this area.

Thirdly, Japan, as a leading country in drug abuse prevention, would like to share our policy, “Dame! Zettai!”, which means absolute zero tolerance to drug abuse, and to achieve the common goal of eradicating drug abuse from the world.

Madam Chairperson,

In the presence of the high-level representatives of member states of the United Nations, I wish to express my strong and sincere desire to reaffirm the concept of “shared responsibility”, to initiate concrete action plans for eradicating drug abuse, and to establish a common political will to fully implement those plans. All nations, whether producing, consuming or transit, should accept an appropriate share of responsibility and work together to strengthen cooperation and coordination of efforts to cope with this global problem.

I give my pledge that Japan will continue to lead in international efforts to carry out the strategy that we agree upon during this session.

Thank you.