



Sakura-Meskel

Newsletter

Embassy of Japan in Ethiopia
ጃፓን ኤምባሲ

June 2010

JAPAN'S NEW CABINET



PM Kan at Press Conference

The Cabinet of Japan's newly-elected Prime Minister Naoto Kan was formally launched on Tuesday 8 June 2010 following an attestation ceremony at the Imperial Palace. Prime Minister Kan became the 94th Prime Minister, after being designated by the Diet on 4 June. Earlier in the day, Kan unveiled his new Cabinet line-up, following the selection of new party executives of Japan's ruling party. At the inauguration press conference, Kan said that the meaning of politics is to "minimize factors that make people unhappy at home and around the world". "I want to rebuild Japan fundamentally and make it a more spirited country," Kan said. The Prime Minister also emphasized the necessity to promote partnership with countries around the world, such as African states.

H.E. PM Naoto Kan was born on 10 October 1946 in Yamaguchi Prefecture. He graduated from the Institute of Technology, Tokyo. PM Kan was first elected to the lower chamber of Japan's Diet in 1980. He co-founded the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in 1996 with Yukio Hatoyama, the outgoing Prime Minister, and served as the party's Co-President. In September 1997, PM Kan was elected as Party President and re-elected in January 1998. He remained in the position until September 1999. From September 2000 to September 2002, PM Kan served as Secretary-General of the DPJ. In December 2002, he was elected again as Party President until May 2004. PM Kan became Deputy Prime Minister in September of 2009 in the Hatoyama Administration and has also been Finance Minister since January 2010.

The 17-members of PM Kan's new cabinet retained 11 Ministers from Hatoyama's cabinet, with Katsuya Okada, Toshimi Kitazawa and Masayuki Naoshima, who served as Foreign Minister, Defense Minister and Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry respectively in Hatoyama's cabinet, remaining in their previous ministerial roles.



Foreign Minister



Defense Minister



Minister of Economy, Trade & Industry

JAPAN EXTENDS 144 MILLION BIRR GRANT AID TO THE GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA



On 25 June 2010, a grant agreement signing ceremony between the Governments of Japan and Ethiopia took place at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development. H.E Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia and H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, signed the grant agreement. The signing ceremony was held for a General Grant Aid Scheme in which Japan extends a grant amount of 960 million Japanese yen (approximately 144 million Ethiopian birr) to Ethiopia.

The objective of the Grant Aid is to supply equipment including, among other things, excavators, bulldozers, motor graders and dump trucks, to upgrade the capacity of the Ethiopian Roads Authority to prevent and address the recurrent landslide challenges in Abay Gorge, and thereafter to contribute to the efforts of the Government of Ethiopia in securing stable traffic flows.

Since 1998, Japan has provided a total grant amount of 15 billion Japanese yen (approximately 2.25 billion Ethiopian birr) for the rehabilitation of the Addis - Goha TSION- Dejen Trunk Road, (223 km) together with the newly constructed Abay Bridge.

AMBASSADOR'S MESSAGE AT THE COMMEMORATION CEREMONY ON WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY HOSTED BY UNEP

2 June 2010



H.E. Ambassador Kinichi Komano

It is a great honor for me, on behalf of my government, to deliver a special message at this important event. We all know that throughout its long history the Earth, our planet, has gone through periods of cooling and warming, often with severe consequences for some of the life forms. The sudden demise of the dinosaurs being perhaps the most famous example. The causes of such changes in the Earth's climate in prehistoric times are still not widely understood.

However, nowadays, we can observe changes in the Earth's climate first hand. The experts consider that our planet is in the 6th Era of Mass Destruction and this time this is being caused by human activities. All of us are involved in this and it is beyond urgent that we all address this issue in a very serious way.

This October, Japan will be hosting the 10th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity (COP 10) in Nagoya, Japan. Toyota is headquartered in Nagoya, by the way. The conference this year has as its task the pursuit of setting goals beyond 2010 in order to arrest further deterioration of bio-diversity by 2020. Japan has taken its responsibility of host to this important conference in earnest and has submitted proposals as its contribution to the secretariat of the Convention. We prepared the proposals in a very pragmatic and concrete way so that developing countries can subscribe to them because you are the key to the success of the mission.

The vision behind the proposals is based upon the belief that human activities need to be in harmony with Nature in order to preserve that Nature while making sustainable use of it. We call this, "Life in Harmony with Nature". At the same time, we think it is important to preserve secondary nature, which has been created through agricultural and forestry activities. This sustainable use of nature has been undertaken in Japan and elsewhere in the world for many years with the life of the local communities fully incorporated. We are preparing to collect these good practices and share and support them with the international community. The Participatory Forest Management Project in Belete-Gera Regional Forestry Priority Area, which JICA experts have been implementing in the Oromia Regional State of Ethiopia, is a case in point.

At the UN General Assembly this year, a High Level Meeting on Bio-diversity will be held to create a good momentum for awareness raising on the importance of bio-diversity throughout the international community. The conservation of bio-diversity is a very important component of "sustainability of the environment", one of the objectives set out in the MDGs. Therefore, the MDG Summit, together with the High Level Meeting on Bio-diversity at the UN General Assembly later this year will jointly deliver an effective message to the international community on the importance of the issue. To underline this message, Japan is also planning to propose that the UN General Assembly adopt the coming ten years as the Decade of Bio-diversity.

The linkage and core benefit between the preservation of bio-diversity and climate change is now widely recognized. From this point of view, in December last year, in the "HATOYAMA Initiative", (Hatoyama was our Prime Minister), Japan, among others, announced a financial contribution of up to 15 billion US dollars out of the 30 billion US dollars pledged by the developed countries as short term financial support to developing countries. This money is to support developing countries efforts for reducing the effect of climate change by the end of 2012. The conservation of bio-diversity is included as one of the areas for support by the HATOYAMA Initiative.

At the same time, Japan is preparing to organize a Ministerial Meeting on Forestry Preservation and Climate Change during COP 10, taking into consideration the close relationship between bio-diversity and the preservation of forests to achieve the goals set for the meeting.

Therefore, we urgently request all our African colleagues to actively participate in our joint efforts, and advise us, so that African voices can be heard on the occasion of COP 10 in Nagoya. It is only by working together that we have a chance to avoid becoming dinosaurs ourselves!

Thank you.

JAPAN EXTENDS 184.7 MILLION BIRR GRANT AID FOR SAFE WATER SUPPLY PROJECTS



A grant signing ceremony between the Governments of Japan and Ethiopia took place at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development on May 14, 2010. H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, and H.E. Ato Ahmed Shide, State Minister of Finance and Economic Development, signed the grant agreement.

For the purpose of contributing to a safe water supply and rehabilitation of clean water service facilities in ten woredas of the Tigray National Regional State Government, the Government of Japan granted 264 billion Japanese Yen (approximately 184.7 million birr) to the Government of Ethiopia. The project

woredas are highly drought affected and there has been a critical water supply shortage for both human and animal consumption over the past three years.

After signing the agreement, H.E. Ambassador Komano said that Japan will remain Ethiopia's development partner in the agricultural sector as well as in the expansion and provision of basic services. H.E. State Minister Ahmed on his part commended the Japanese Government for its continued assistance to Ethiopia while the world is facing financial crisis and economic downturn.

This agreement was the fifth grant agreement in this year (2010 G.C). Earlier, in January and March, the two countries had signed four agreements: to finance the purchases of services for a detailed design to implement a Rural Water Supply project in Tigray Region, to provide support for the implementation of a Forest Preservation Program, and a Food Aid and Food Security Project for Underprivileged Farmers throughout the country.

JAPAN SUPPORTS PRIMARY SCHOOL EXPANSIONS IN OROMIYA AND SNNPRS



An Inauguration ceremony for projects funded through the Japanese Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) took place in Tulubolo (Oromiya) and Wolayitta (SNNPRS) on 8 and 14 April 2010 respectively. H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano, the Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia celebrated the completion of both projects together with H.E. Ato Girma Woldegiorgis, the President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Ambassador Teshome Toga, the Speaker of the House of Peoples' Representatives, representatives of the Becho Woreda and Wolayitta Zone, as well as members of the respective communities.



The project in Oromiya, named the Fitawrari Habte Giorgis Aba Mechal Primary School Rehabilitation and Expansion Project, constructed one block (4 classrooms) and a library, and provided school furniture (e.g. 128 student desk and chair sets, 4 blackboards, 4 teacher desk and chair sets), and was implemented by Becho Woreda Education Bureau at the cost of US\$81,782. On the other hand, the project for Bitena Primary School Expansion, Wolayitta, SNNPRS, constructed two school buildings (8 classrooms), one toilet block (6 toilets), and a water system, and provided school furniture (e.g. 145 student desk sets). The project was implemented by the Wolayitta Development Association at the cost of US\$87,861. Both projects



aim to improve the overall educational environment, and access to primary education. In this Japanese fiscal year, from April 2010 to March 2011, the GGP plans to launch 20 projects throughout Ethiopia for vulnerable and marginalized people.

BOYS' DAY

Boys' Day has a long history of a thousand of years, and began as a custom of the Samurai, the military-based ruling class in the feudal period. It was originally celebrated on the 5th day of the 5th moon in the lunar calendar. However, after the Japanese switched to the use of the Gregorian calendar, the date was fixed to 5th May.

Inspired by the legend that a carp swam upstream against a rapid current and became a dragon, the Japanese people hoist a carp-shaped streamer outside of their houses on a tall pole to wish their boys success in life. A set of carp-shaped streamers consists of, from the top of the pole down, a pair of arrow-spoked wheels with a ball-shaped spinning vane, five colored windsocks, and a black and a red carp.

The sword and armor were a spiritual symbol of the Samurai as it protected them from injury or death while in battle. Also on the Boys' Day, people display an armored doll with an imitation sword, wishing their boys to be sound in mind and strong in body because it is believed that the armor and sword will drive out evil spirits and protect their boys from bad luck.

EMBASSY CELEBRATES BOYS' DAY

On 19 May 2010, the Embassy of Japan organized a Boys' Day Festival together with a gathering of people who had studied, trained and worked in Japan.

On the occasion, the Ambassador of Japan to Ethiopia, H.E. Mr. Kinichi Komano also made a connection between the amazing ability of the carp to survive against strong currents and the missions of Ethiopian alumni to extricate their country from the vice of poverty. Stressing the coincidence of the gathering and the Boys' Day Festival, H.E. Mr. Komano further said that the ability of the carp exemplified the hard work required to overcome challenges and problems which could be imitated by Ethiopian children to make a real contribution to the development of Ethiopia.

Representing the former scholarship recipients, Dr. Solomon Yirga, who is an Associate Professor of Biology at the Science Faculty of Addis Ababa University, on his part said that the Japanese people were wonderful hosts during their stay in Japan. He also referred to the pre-Italian occupation proponents of development, the Japanizers, and testified that the path of Japanese development is indeed a great example for Ethiopia. Dr. Solomon enumerated hospitality, friendliness, hard work and discipline as the cultural similarities between the two countries. Japan is a country of age-old culture and respected competitors in the world, he added.

As part of the festivities, a demonstration of Japanese fencing, Kendo (the way of swords) was given by Japanese overseas volunteers. It is a traditional Japanese martial art of sword-fighting based on traditional Japanese swordsmanship practiced during the earliest Samurai Government in Japan. Kendo is a physically and mentally challenging activity that combines strong martial arts values with sport-like physical elements. The legendary Ethiopian entertainer Tilahun Gessesse's Amharic song, "Japanwan Wodijje" was also performed by a Japanese choir with a view of heightening the cultural ties between the two countries. The music had been translated into Japanese by Ms. Berberich Yuko.

The event was attended by State Ministers, members of the diplomatic corps and the media, in addition to the people who had studied, trained and worked in Japan.

