

February 2011

Embassy of Japan in Rwanda

Contents

1. Climate Change
2. The Adoption of the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK
3. Launch of the "Visa for Medical Stay"

1 Climate Change: Japan's View on COP16

From November 29 to December 11 of 2010, the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP16) was held in Cancun, Mexico. From Japan, H.E. Mr. Ryu Matsumoto, Minister of the Environment, and Vice-Ministers attended the meeting. At COP16, the "Cancun Agreements" were adopted as a final outcome of the meeting.

The Cancun Agreements decide to anchor the mitigation pledges of both developed and developing countries submitted according to the Copenhagen Accord under the UNFCCC and include core elements of major areas such as REDD+, finance and technology in a balanced manner. Japan expresses its appreciation to Mexico, the President of COP16, for its extensive efforts in producing the Cancun Agreements. Japan continues to engage in advancing the negotiations by building on the Cancun Agreements to establish a new comprehensive legally-binding document.

One of the main issues at COP16 was the treatment of the 2nd commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol. As the first commitment period will end in 2012, a future structure of international framework beyond 2012 is under consideration in the UNFCCC negotiations. Japan takes the position to oppose the establishment of the 2nd commitment period. The best way to defend the real interest of the entire globe is to establish a new international legally-binding framework with the participation of all major economies, including the US and China which collectively occupy 40% of global energy-related CO2 emissions but are not committed to emission reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol. Japan will continue to exert its utmost efforts to establish such a framework by developing the Cancun Agreements which seem to cover more than 80% of total emissions. (The total CO2 emissions from the Parties under the obligation of the Kyoto Protocol account for only 27%.)

Japan's position is based neither on the narrow national interest nor on business calculation. Japan is committed to continue its ambitious emission reduction efforts beyond 2012. It is harmful to set the 2nd commitment period, as it will lead to solidifying the unfair and ineffective framework beyond 2012, under

which only the Parties under the Kyoto Protocol are bound by reduction obligations. Once the 2nd commitment period was set, the momentum of establishing a new legally-binding framework and the momentum for that would be lost. Japan cannot make a short term “deal”, while not addressing seriously the problem of the next decade. Such a deal will by no means serve for enhancing Japan’s national interest or for tackling global warming.

2 The Adoption of the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the DPRK and Entry into Force of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance: Efforts to Solve the Abduction Issue

On December 21, the Resolution on the Situation of Human Rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK), which was co-tabled by Japan and the EU, was adopted by majority vote for the sixth consecutive year at the plenary session of the 65th UN General Assembly. The resolution expresses very serious concern at various violations of human rights in North Korea and strongly urges North Korea to respect fully all human rights and fundamental freedoms, and to resolve urgently the abduction issue, including the immediate return of abductees.

To improve the human rights situation in North Korea, it is essential for the international community to work in cooperation to continue encouraging North Korea to take concrete actions towards improvement. The Government of Japan considers that the adoption of the resolution supported by a large number of votes at the plenary session of the UN General Assembly, composed of all UN member states, for six consecutive years indicates that concern about the human rights situation in North Korea, including the abduction issue, remains strong, and sends a clear message from the international community urging North Korea to improve the situation.

In addition, on December 23, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance entered into force. This Convention prescribes enforced disappearance including abduction as crime. It also provides for the necessary measures to be taken by States Parties in order to ensure a framework for punishment and for prevention.

The significance of this Convention is to confirm enforced disappearance including abduction in the international community as punishable offence, and to deter offence of this nature from being repeated in the future. Japan attaches importance to this Convention from the viewpoint of increasing interest of the international community in enforced disappearance including abduction and therefore highly welcomes its entry into force.

3 Launch of the "Visa for Medical Stay": Medical Check-up, Treatment, and Sightseeing All in One Visit to Japan

The New Growth Strategy, which was approved by the Japanese Cabinet in June 2010, sets out the national strategy of Japan for achieving economic growth as a tourism-oriented nation. Specifically, it states that, "By taking steps to attract more visitors from elsewhere in Asia and other foreign visitors to Japan, such as easing tourist visa requirements, creating appealing tourist attractions, improving the environment for foreign students studying in Japan, and undertaking publicity relations initiatives, Japan will increase the annual number of foreign visitors to 25 million by the beginning of 2020 and to 30 million in the future." To meet this objective, Japan took measures to ease the individual sightseeing visa requirements for Chinese in July 2010. As a result, approximately 3 to 8 times more visas were issued in each month after July 2010 compared to the same month of the previous year.

The Government of Japan also launched its services for the "Visa for Medical Stay" in January 2011. The aim of this visa is to promote Japanese medical services, such as medical check-ups and treatment, and related services in close cooperation with tourism. The visa is issued not only to patients but also their accompanying person(s) if necessary and as needed (multiple visas may be issued), and the system as a whole is designed to be more convenient, in consideration of humanitarian aspects, for foreign nationals wishing to visit Japan for medical purposes. We hope that the creation of the "Visa for Medical Stay" will encourage more foreign patients and others to visit Japan to access Japan's high-level medical technology and recuperate. At the same time, we hope that through touring Japan using this visa, visitors will experience the various aspects of Japanese culture and discover the many other appeals of Japan.

(For more information on the "Visa for Medical Stay," please refer to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website: http://www.mofa.go.jp/j_info/visit/visa/medical_stay1.html)

For more information on Japan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan <http://www.mofa.go.jp>

Embassy of Japan in Rwanda <http://www.rw.emb-japan.go.jp>

Japan Echo Web <http://www.japanechoweb.jp/>

Web Japan <http://web-japan.org/>