

UNSGAB Dialogue with Japan
May 27 2008, 8:45 – 12:30
Tokyo Japan
Chair's Summary

Members of the United Nations Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation (UNSGAB) met with representatives of four Japanese ministries to discuss Japan's actions to support implementation of the Hashimoto Action Plan (HAP). UNSGAB Chair, HRH Prince Willem Alexander of the Netherlands opened the discussion by expressing his sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan for hosting the 10th UNSGAB meeting in Tokyo and for playing a leading role in global water governance.

Ambassador for Global Environmental Affairs of Japan, Mr. Kyoji Komachi moderated and presented "International Cooperation, Water and Sanitation, Japan ODA." He noted that 37% of Japanese ODA (2001 – 2005) was committed to the water sector. He outlined Japan's Water and Sanitation Broad Partnership Initiative (WASABI), grant aid, as well as loan and technical assistance.

Vice-Minister for Engineering Affairs of Land, Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism (MLIT), Mr. Hiroaki Taniguchi presented "Implementation of HAP and MLIT's Actions." The following actions according to HAP chapters were described.

IWRM

- Development of "Guidelines for IWRM at River Basin Level": The Ministry will support UNESCO to produce Guidelines to promote the IWRM Plans of each country by sharing experience and knowledge, and co-convening workshops.
- Exchange of knowledge and experience on IWRM with countries in the Asian monsoon region through workshops organized the Network on Asian River Basin Organization (NARBO)

Water and Disaster

- Supporting the activities of the "High-Level Expert Panel on Water and Disaster/UNSGAB" by providing standards, technology experience, traditional knowledge and regional actions while mobilizing political will to reduce water-related disaster.
- Ensuring the link between disaster and water management experts at the global level through the International Center for Water Hazard and Risk Management and its activities.
- Promoting technology transfers on structural and non-structural measures in a way to meet the needs of developing countries.
- Supporting adaptation to climate change by: projecting the change of rainfall intensity in each region, developing and effectively using facilities; regulating and guiding land use; promoting living styles to minimize damage; sharing hazard information with hazard maps; and providing real-time disaster information.
- Strengthening importance of adaptation to climate change and bring awareness.

- Developing and promoting technologies to secure water supply during and after disasters and accidents (with emergency water storage tanks, mobile desalination units, and water bags etc).

Sanitation (Sewerage System)

- Supporting country-suitable technology transfer based on Japanese experience and technology through comprehensive support to sewerage projects and capacity development through workshops.
- Developing new technologies in Japan and responding to developing country technology needs including membrane treatment (spreading sewerage system and utilization of treated wastewater) and sewage-sludge energy generation (to reduce greenhouse gases).
- Conducting a study about Japanese contributions to global water and sanitation issues through a Symposium on Sewerage System in the IYS in September 2008 (UNSGAB requested to support this study).
- Facilitating the Committee for International Cooperation in the Sewerage Sector, June 2008 to make concrete activities to implement the action plan announced at Japan Wastewater Committee for Asia Pacific Water Summit and promote Japanese technology and experience to contribute to the MDGs.

Director-General, Waste Management & Recycling Department, Ministry of the Environment (MOE), Mr. Hideto Yoshida presented “Japan’s Challenge for Environmental Sanitation.” He described a domestic waste water treatment system “Johkasou,” not as Septic tank, which combines anaerobic treatment, aerobic treatment and disinfection and can be treatment with night soil and domestic waste water in hygienic. Johkasou have various technical solutions for the target of water purification and cost these developing countries needs. And, Japan constructs night-soil treatment systems with hygienic night-soil transportation and night-soil treatment plant.

Director, Water Supply Division, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), Mr. Sombo Yamamura presented “Water Operators Partnerships.” He promised Japan’s further efforts to promote WOPs by sharing Japanese experience in leakage control, operation and maintenance, financial management and human resource development. He also committed USD 2 million funding through Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Japan Special Fund for the foundation of WOPs and technical assistance, and mentioned collaboration with ADB and support for Global WOP promoted by UN-Habitat and ADB).

Counselor to the President, Yuji Okazaki, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) presented “WOPs and JICA.” He said JICA will reinforce technical cooperation, grant-aid and Yen-loan upon and after the JICA & Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) merger, develop adaptive capacity against climate change through leakage reduction and water saving, and strive to realize ‘human security’ by sharing the experience of Japanese water operators.

Executive Director of the JBIC, Kazushi Hashimoto presented “Financing Water by Japan’s ODA Loan.” In relation to the HAP financing objective, he said JBIC has incorporated capacity development of water operators, particularly governance improvements, into almost all financed projects. In addition, under the US-Japan Clean Water Initiative, JBIC is collaborating with USAid to channel private sector funds for water and sanitation projects through Japanese ODA loans and USAid guarantee.

UNSGAB members sincerely thanked the Japanese government for seriously reflecting the HAP in its water related work and for sharing instructive and illuminating presentations.

The Johkasou waste treatment system was welcomed as a way to serve small communities which are the most difficult and costly to cover. The multifaceted support to WOPs was applauded, given that any investment in sanitation or water infrastructure will not be sustainable in the absence of capacity development. In the case of sanitation delivery, the need to upgrade existing non-functioning systems is a key challenge and the comprehensive training and technical support approach of operators was heartily supported by UNSGAB.

Japan’s announcement to double its portion of ODA to Africa was enthusiastically welcomed. Several pointed to the G-8 commitment at Gleneagles and requested Japan to encourage members to revisit this promise to increase ODA during the next G-8 meeting.

In wrapping up the session, the Vice-Chair Ms. Uschi Eid thanked Japan for its hospitality and said members felt encouraged and rewarded by Japan’s actions. Water and sanitation is primarily about gender and in this connection she acknowledged the work of Japanese women, in particular of Ms. Ogata. Although Japan does not have transboundary water, the country supports transboundary water management and she suggested Japan’s ratification of the UN Convention on the Law of Non-navigational Uses of International Water Courses. The HAP is promoting the entry into force as it is a way to reduce water conflicts in the Asia Pacific region (19 more countries need to ratify the treaty to become effective). She wished Japan a successful TICAD conference and thanked everyone for their enthusiastic participation.