

Statement by Mr. Kunio Hatoyama,
Minister of Justice, Japan

Rome, 21 November 2007

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, good morning,

Today, as we know, is the tenth anniversary of the official adoption of the “Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions”.

It is indeed a great pleasure and privilege for me to be given this opportunity to participate in this high level meeting here in Rome, on what is such a milestone occasion.

In today’s society, increasingly characterized by the globalization of corporate activity all around the world, it is vital to ensure fair competition in all aspects of international business transactions. Bribery of foreign public officials seriously harms fair competition among businesses, and is a practice which has adverse impact on both society and the public in many different ways. For these and other reasons, such acts must not be tolerated. Moreover, when it comes to combating corruption in our globalized society today, it is essential that countermeasures be conceived and promoted not only by individual countries, but also on an international macro level.

Under this OECD Convention, State Parties are expressly required to treat bribery of foreign public officials as criminal behavior. The Convention also stipulates conditions with regard to mutual cooperation and extradition between countries, to provide a cohesive international framework to deal with bribery of foreign public officials.

Japan has been a party to the Convention since it first entered into effect. Over the years, we have engaged in beneficial and vigorous opinion exchanges with other State Parties in order to contribute to its effective implementation.

Today, as noted, marks a decade since adoption of the Convention, during which time economic globalization has advanced dramatically. At the same time, in the midst of increasingly more complex economic endeavours, a wide range of criminal activity is also being carried out with greater ingenuity. In recent years, a number of countries have become new parties to the Convention, while others are in the process of consideration. This, I feel certain you will agree, is a highly welcome trend.

If I might, at this point, draw your attention to one additional point. That is the importance of outreach activities. In order to ensure that the endeavours under the Convention are successfully achieved, combating of corruption on the part of newly industrialized countries and developing countries that are not State Parties to the Convention is of vital importance. In this context, the significance of such outreach programmes as the ADB/OECD Anti-Corruption Initiative for Asia Pacific cannot be overemphasized.

Newly emerging nations, supported by robust growth and economic strength, continue to appear on the international scene. Many of these countries are charting spectacular progress in the global community. Nevertheless, to ensure the formation of a strong society through healthy development and fair competition, efforts must be made by all countries to eliminate acts of corruption against foreign public officials leaving no room for loopholes.

Japan, in rising to the challenge of guaranteeing effective implementation and enforcement of this Convention, pledges to continue to adhere to the rules stipulated in this instrument, and to work with all other State Parties in striving towards this end.

In closing, we look forward to working closely with all the countries participating today, and it is my deepest hope that, through our committed partnerships built on trust, we will be able to further enhance our mutual future growth and development.

Thank you for your kind attention.