

International Symposium : Challenges of State-building in Asia -Global Responsibility in Development Cooperation of Japan and Germany-

Keynote Speech by Dr. Sadako OGATA, President, JICA

State Building and Human Security

Good morning, everybody. Let me start by expressing my warm welcome to all the participants from abroad and from the country. I would like to thank Ambassador STANZEL, Dr. BOSSE, and Honorable Ms. Nishimura to be here this morning.

Since the end of World War II, Germany and Japan have continually pursued reconstruction based on similar principles—rebuilding our countries on the principles of democracy and economic progress, social and international solidarity and also a determination to contribute to developing countries.

Especially in the field of development assistance, both countries have emphasized economic and social development rather than through military assistance.

As Dr. BOSSE has mentioned, this is the third symposium taking place between German and Japanese organizations focusing on developmental assistance. The first was held in 2005 and the latest was held in January in Berlin.

And our aim was to continue to develop joint strategies and tactics and to promote closer partnership in tackling global issues.

And having dedicated the last meeting to Africa, this meeting will concentrate on the issue of 'state building' in South and East Asia, and the role of development assistance in the process of state-building. Special attention will be given to the concept of 'human security' as an overriding conceptual framework.

In order to protect people from various threats and dangers, it is important to focus on persons within as well as "beyond" the state; that is, as both beneficiaries as well as contributors. Legitimacy, a judicial system and economic stability are fundamental pillars of the state needed to provide physical security, basic social services (such as health, education, etc.) and employment for the people. In that sense, state building is one of the critically important pillars to enhance human security; but state-building cannot be achieved without strengthening human security.

And through development assistance covering basic services, such as education, health, clean water, etc, contributions to enhance the capacity of the people and the social and economic institutions are very important. Through financial assistance and technical cooperation, development assistance enhances ownership by local people resulting in economic and political stability that are vital elements for state building.

A common global agenda for Germany and Japan is, first of all climate change, and second, conflict and insecurity. They remain widespread and need to be tackled in order to overcome abject poverty.

Development assistance, particularly in the fields of socio-economic development and peace building, are our common tasks.

Globally significant changes are taking place. In particular we note the role of the G20 group including rapidly growing countries such as China, Brazil and India among others (and there are many more to come). There is increasingly strong expectation that these 'new' countries are going to play more and more important roles in shaping international policy as well as economic agendas.

Recently, general elections were held in Germany and Japan, resulting in a new administration in Tokyo and confirming (but somehow, also changing) the leadership of the CDU party in Berlin. In Washington, the Obama administration has signaled a change of direction leading to stronger multilateral collaborative efforts in order to gain peace and development.

Our focus today will be on 'state building' in Asia, in particular to assess the role of development assistance in this process.

I think it should be recognized at the outset that no one model fits all countries—it's very important that we recognize that history, geography, ethnic composition and other factors make every state uniquely individual and different. Our efforts have to be targeted to understanding what are the special characteristics of each state and each people. And this is, I think, the first lesson that we should learn when we deal with development assistance.

I hope that lively discussions today among all participants—and they are politicians, scholars, journalists and a variety of interested people—will successfully respond to questions such as: what lessons can we learn from the experiences in Asia? How can development assistance contribute to state building? And what is the ultimate role of the state?

In October, I visited Iraq which is reaching another critical point in its effort to rebuild itself with the pending or expected withdrawal of a large number of American troops.

In talks with leaders in Baghdad and Erbil and also with the diplomatic corps—the American Ambassador, Japanese Ambassador, and so on—it became clear to me how difficult it is to rebuild a state when it has been totally destroyed. Shifting from a period of military actions against terrorism and confrontation, Iraq may now be entering the stage of diplomacy-led political action and economic and social development-led recovery.

In this particular situation, JICA has been contributing to the process by providing heavy infrastructure assistance such as energy, electricity, water supply, and so on. But we discovered through our discussions there that what they really want now is a much more people-focused kind of development: agriculture. Iraq was and is basically a country led by agriculture—and agriculture and rural development is what the leaders seem to want. We will have to review the agricultural structure there, the practices, what the Oil for Food program did in the past—these are all factors that we have to examine.

Afghanistan, will be discussed later, so I don't want to go into great detail. But it is a country I visited frequently as United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to help some six million refugees. It is currently undergoing very critical phases of rebuilding after years of poverty, foreign intervention, and conflict and insurgency.

In Afghanistan, JICA has a sizable program of socio-economic development ranging from health, education and employment programs. And I think there has been considerable advancement at the socioeconomic level—the daily lives of people. There are ongoing difficulties, the Taliban and other factors that prevent the straightforward development of the country. There is a lot of international support but also—maybe intervention is the right word—which complicate the process. But let's hope that the current election will be a new starting point for the country to grow. Next year, Japan and Afghanistan will be observing 80 years of diplomatic relations. It's a very old country that Japan has had very—shall I say, long and close interaction and support. And I think the 80th anniversary next year will mark a different phase in our relationship and in Afghan reconstruction.

Lessons—there are other lessons that we will be going through: Indonesia—and I'm very glad that we have a good representative here—the world's fourth largest state by population and the largest Islamic nation, has emerged from a period of turmoil. It successfully held presidential elections recently, and is moving on—decentralized its administrative structures and undergone steady economic growth and expansion. It is one of Asia's leading countries economically (a member of the G20) and we expect a lot from Indonesia as it grows and takes a more and more important international role.

Cambodia was once a destroyed state. I have long been involved there, leading the first Japanese medical team to the Thai-Cambodia border, then with the United Nations as it took over the transition phase and then bringing back the Cambodian refugees.

Cambodia is one example of a situation that was agreed upon internationally, including the 1991 Paris Peace Accord—the kind of agreement which is turning out to be very rare these days. Cambodia has since achieved great progress including the repatriation of refugees and a wide range of social and economic growth and reconstruction. We can learn a lot from the Cambodian experience.

Both Germany and Japan have followed a similar two-pronged approach to state building. Social and economic development assistance has focused on capacity building and institution building based on the capacity of the people. In turn, the people learn more and more to manage their own affairs, and then turn the state into one with solid grounds of responsible governance. And these are very important lessons that we can learn from various involvement that Germany and Japan have had.

I think through this discussion, we will see how our approaches are dissimilar or how they are similar—and one thing that I hope you will examine is how do you strengthen the capacity of the people as a way to strengthening the functions of the state. I think people—local and central, national institutions and state are connected. And the process is very important to examine.

I think that both Germany and Japan will follow similar paths in the future, and try to cooperate with each other's attempts and efforts. And I think this will make a big contribution globally. I think in Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia there are both many lessons and challenges ahead.

And I trust this seminar will help pave the way, not only for closer collaboration but also to help us better understand and pursue the complicated challenge of 'state building' as a way of reaching global governance.

Thank you very much, thank you for being here, and I hope you'll have a good meeting. Thank you.