

**Speech by Mr. KAMOSHIDA Naoaki,
Counsellor, Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
At the Wheelchairs Handover Ceremony
At the office of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth
Rehabilitation in Phnom Penh
August 19, 2015**

- H.E. Vong Saurth, Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation,
- H.E. Chin Marlin, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Justice,
- H.E. Em Chan Makara, Secretary General, Disability Action Council,
- Mr. Tomoyuki Katano, Director of the Volunteers Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children,
- Excellencies, distinguished guests, Ladies and Gentlemen ;

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today's ceremony, in the presence of H.E. Vong Saurth, Minister of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, to hand over 160 wheelchairs to 10 rehabilitation centers and other facilities across Cambodia.

The donation of these wheelchairs was made possible by a Japanese NPO "The Volunteer Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children", in cooperation with the Japanese Government.

For the past two decades, Cambodia has experienced rapid development and the lives of Cambodian people in general have been significantly improved. However, it is also true that Cambodia still has numerous challenges. The lives of handicapped children, for example, are still considerably difficult due to a lack of adequate support. These children, suffering from landmine explosions or affected by cerebral paralysis, do not have adequate access to proper rehabilitation care or medical treatment. Furthermore, they tend to lose opportunities of going to schools and participating in social activities.

In this context, it is really admirable that since 2010, the Japanese NPO “the Volunteer Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children,” has donated as many as 320 refurbished wheelchairs to rehabilitation centers across Cambodia, so that disabled children could have adequate access to rehabilitation and medical treatment. We would like to express our gratitude also to the Disability Action Council and the JICA Alumni Association in Cambodia for assisting the Volunteer Group in implementation of this project.

Through the projects implemented by the Volunteer Group in the past, a significant number of disabled children have become able to go to schools and participate in social activities by using the donated wheelchairs. I am pleased to see that the 160 wheelchairs to be donated today will further increase this number and help more children to expand their horizons. I also believe that the project will promote understanding of the special needs of these children among the Cambodian people and contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment in which the disabled children can fully fulfill their potentials.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express once again my sincere appreciation to all of you who have been working hard for better future of the disabled children.

I sincerely hope that these wheelchairs will be effectively used and maintained in good condition as a symbol of friendship between Japan and the Kingdom of Cambodia for many years to come.

Thank you very much for your attention.