

Speech by Mr. TAMAMITSU Shinichi,
First Secretary, Chief of Economic & ODA Section,
Embassy of Japan in Cambodia
At the Wheelchairs Handover Ceremony at
Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation
September 26th, 2013

- Venerable Monks
- H.E. Mr. Sem Sokha, Secretary of State, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation,
- H.E. Mr. Em Chan Makara, Secretary General of Disability Action Council Secretariat General,
- H.E. Mr. Ly Sovannarith, Vice President of JICA Alumni Association in Cambodia,
- Mr. Tomoyuki Katano, Director, “The Volunteers Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children Japan”,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to attend today’s ceremony, with the high presence of H.E. Sem Sokha, Secretary of State, Ministry of Social Affairs, Veterans and Youth Rehabilitation, to hand over 160 wheelchairs to 9 rehabilitation centers across Cambodia.

The donation of wheelchairs was conducted by a Japanese NPO “The Volunteer Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children”, in cooperation with the Japanese Government.

I am particularly glad that the ceremony is conducted in the special context of this year 2013 which marks the 60th anniversary of Japan-Cambodia Friendship.

For the past two decades, Cambodia experienced a rapid development and the lives of its people have significantly improved. However, Cambodia is still faced with numerous challenges for achieving further development. The lives of handicapped children,

for example, are still considerably difficult due to a lack of adequate supports. These children who are maimed by landmines or affected by cerebral paralysis often have to stay at home with no means of mobility and in some cases have no opportunities for receiving rehabilitation, medical treatment and education.

Since 2010, a Japanese NPO “the Volunteer Group to Send Wheelchairs to Overseas Children,” has donated 160 refurbished wheelchairs to rehabilitation centers across Cambodia so that disabled children could have adequate access to rehabilitation and medical treatment. The Disability Action Council and the JICA Alumni Association in Cambodia have also been coordinating with the NPO in this project.

I was briefed that the wheelchairs previously donated had enabled handicapped children to commute schools and participate in social activities. Thus, I expect the additional 160 wheelchairs donated today will also serve the purpose and fulfill the basic needs of and improve the living conditions of those children. I am also hopeful that this project will promote the understanding of the families and the communities for the special needs of these children, which may contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment for the children with disabilities.

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation to all of you who have been working in this project and who are present here today.

Finally, I strongly hope that these wheelchairs will be effectively utilized and maintained in good condition as a symbol of the friendship between the Kingdom of Cambodia and Japan.

Thank you very much for your attention.