

**Remarks by Mr. OTA Ken,
First Secretary of the Embassy of Japan in the Kingdom of Cambodia
On the occasion of the Third Regional Legal Research Group Meeting
7 Sep 2017**

- H.E. Mr. Ang VongVathna, Minister of Justice
- Ms Noriko SHIBATA, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Officer of UNODC Regional Office for Southeast Asia and the Pacific
- Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great pleasure for me to have an opportunity to make a welcome remark today at the Third Regional Legal Research Group Meeting. Japan highly appreciates the dedicated work of Ministry of Justice and UNODC for convening this meeting and also the cooperation of partner countries.

Japan commends UNODC's continuous engagement in providing technical assistance to partner countries. We welcome the report which Ms. Shibata mentioned earlier, "Child Sexual Exploitation in Travel and Tourism: An Analysis of Domestic Legal Frameworks" as an outcome of Project Childhood, and highly regard the efforts of the organization as well as these partner countries.

We are pleased to share with you that the government of Japan has contributed about 100,000 dollars for supporting the project of UNODC for Strengthening and Enhancing the Capacity of Law Enforcement Officials in Combating Travelling Child Sex Offenders in this region, and today's meeting is a part of this project.

Taking this opportunity, please allow me to briefly touch upon the reasons why we have attached great importance to this project.

Firstly, combating child sexual exploitation is a common issue for the whole international community, including Japan. We have taken the views that child sexual exploitation can never be tolerated because it is an extremely malicious crime that has harmful effects on children both physically and mentally, and significantly infringes their human rights. In addition, child sexual exploitation using the Internet often hurts them

continuously for a long time in any period and place. From this point of view, Japan has been actively taking initiatives to combat child sexual exploitation, including the formulation of the Basic Plan for Countermeasures Relating to Sexual Exploitation of Children. We should be reminded that human trafficking, including child sexual exploitation, is a global issue and it should be addressed through international cooperation beyond country borders.

Secondly, Japan highly values the efforts and expertise of UNODC as the partner for this project. UNODC is the sole international organization which can comprehensively deal with the negative aspects of Globalization such as terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, corruption and cybercrime, not only through normative activities but also projects on the ground. Especially, the high level of expertise and abundant experience of UNODC are essential assets for the effort in legal capacity building. Japan and UNODC have a long history of collaboration and a unique dialogue scheme for sharing mutual interest in further enhancing cooperation. In June 2013, we developed a Joint Plan of Action, and we have held Strategic Policy Dialogues several times. We, therefore, are of the view that Project Childhood II is consistent with this Joint Plan of Action. I am pleased that the cooperation between UNODC and Japan has been achieving great results in various projects in the world and hope that this cooperation will lead to fruitful results in this project as well.

Last but not least, the government of Japan focuses on the development of the Mekong region. We see today's meeting as consistent and in harmony with the endeavors of Mekong-Japan Cooperation such as the Mekong-Japan Action Plan adopted at the 8th Mekong-Japan Foreign Minister's Meeting in 2015. It described the implementation of the projects on capacity building for anti-trafficking in persons in this region. While the regional cooperation contains measures for strengthening hard and soft connectivity, including infrastructure development and human resource development, I would also like to emphasize that protecting children who will bear the future of this interconnected region is very important for the entire development of this region.

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In closing, please rest assured Japan remains a supporter and partner for the development of this region. I hope that the Regional Legal Research Group continues to play a role as a platform to share legal research findings and that this meeting will become successful and contribute to further progress in regional cooperation to discuss mechanisms to address legal gaps in combating child sexual exploitation.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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