

**Summary Minutes of the 1st Meeting between NGOs/CSOs
and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on the Paris Declaration**

Date & Time: Wednesday, 14 May 2008, 17:30-19:20
Venue: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, South Building Room No. 893
Participants: 38 in total (31 from NGOs/CSOs (1 absent), 3 from MOFA, 2 from JICA and 2 from JBIC)

1. Rules of the Meetings

- Do not quote the participants with their names outside of the meetings.
- The meetings will serve as a forum for interactive dialogues between NGOs/CSOs and MOFA, not only Q & A sessions.

2. Issues for Discussion on the Paris Declaration

- NGOs and MOFA made Power Point presentations.
- NGOs summarised the background of the Paris Declaration, viewpoints on aid effectiveness, development effectiveness and the current situation the objectives of ODA. NGOs highlighted the meaning of civil society's involvement in discussions on the Paris Declaration, importance of their dialogues with the Government of Japan (GOJ) and challenges facing Japanese ODA, and raised the following issues for discussion: 1) democratisation and transparency of the ODA process, 2) untying of ODA and 3) improvement of aid predictability.
- MOFA briefed on the preparatory regional forum for Accra HLF which took place in Bangkok in April-May, at which participants from aid recipient countries stressed the importance of "strengthening of the ownership of aid recipient countries" and "approach to enhance aid outcomes." MOFA argued that 1) whereas GOJ agrees on the overall directions of the Declaration, its indicators are too technical and hard for the Japanese public to understand, 2) the outcome is not fully examined, 3) the areas covered by the indicators are unilateral and they are not applicable to the evaluation of quality, 4) the Paris Declaration lacks flexibility to incorporate new aid donors (e.g. BRICs) and 5) discussion on ownership is inadequate. MOFA explained about its engagements in the following areas: 1) capacity development, 2) improvement aid effectiveness in the area of infrastructure development and 3) incorporation of new (non-DAC) donors.

3. Second Meeting between NGOs/CSOs and MOFA

- MOFA proposed ownership including the perspective of outcome as an agenda of the second meeting, on which MOFA will make a presentation. NGOs will

later propose an agenda based on the discussion at the first meeting.

- The second meeting will be organised after the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit.

4. Major comments during free discussions

(A participant from NGOs/CSOs)

- MOFA explained that GOJ agrees to the objectives of the Paris Declaration but disagrees to the indicators. Does it mean that GOJ will not work on achieving the indicators, or will GOJ make efforts to meet the agreed commitments? I would also like to request for clarification on the definitions of “development outcome” and “self-reliance (*jiritsu*)” which were mentioned by MOFA’s presentation.

(A participant from MOFA)

- Although Japan has been involved in the Paris Declaration since its formulation process, the contents of the Declaration and its follow-up mechanism were not perfect and further improvement is required. GOJ accepts the indicators as a premise, and besides, GOJ has produced its own Action Plan on the implementation of the Paris Declaration and Annual Progress Reports, both of which are available at our website.

The reason why we used the term “development outcome” instead of “aid effectiveness” in our presentation is because we wanted to stress that the ultimate goal is not to maximise aid effectiveness as stipulated in the Paris Declaration but to achieve concrete outcomes such as MDGs. As for the “self-reliance,” the current Paris Declaration focuses only on the aspects of inputs – how to provide or receive aid, but we think it is important to adopt an idea as to how to establish “self-reliance” without depending on aid.

- We are using the word “self-reliance” as reaching the situation where people of aid recipient countries are able to make their livings without aid at the end. For instance, budget support encouraged by the Paris Declaration entails a possibility to accelerate aid dependency, which has a negative impact on “self-reliance.” “Capacity development” by technical assistance, on the other hand, is effective in promoting “self-reliance.”

(NGOs/CSOs)

- For many developing countries, aid accounts for only a small part of their entire development funds. I share the same view as MOFA in using the word “development outcome,” as it includes the idea of effective utilisation of trade income and private funds. I wonder if NGOs could elaborate on the meaning of “democratisation of ownership” which was mentioned during their presentation.

(NGOs/CSOs)

- In the Paris Declaration, ownership is measured by whether the aid recipient

countries have their own development strategies or not. In reality, however, development strategies launched by the aid recipient governments do not always reflect the needs of the citizens. We are using the term “democratisation of ownership” because we believe democratization is necessary for the concept of ownership to address the situation where cleavages exist between governments and citizens.

(MOFA)

- In view of the difficulty to discuss all the kinds of issues that both sides are concerned about, I would like to propose that we focus on two or three topics. This meeting should be a forum where MOFA and NGOs/CSOs widely exchange views on the Paris Declaration and post-Accra aid approaches, since both are actors implementing aid, not opposing against each other.

(NGOs/CSOs)

- I agree on selecting a few agenda. Provided that Japanese ODA tends to lack participation of citizens, “democratic ownership” will be an important topic. I would also like to suggest discussing on specific sectors such as agricultural sector. I would also like to know the schedule of the round table meetings of the Accra HLF, which was mentioned by MOFA.

(MOFA)

- The concept papers of the round table meetings were drafted by the Chairs of the respective meetings. You can find the draft concept papers and the draft AAA, outcome document of the Accra HLF, at the DAC’s website.

(NGOs/CSOs)

- In order to discuss aid comprehensively, I would like to propose that dialogues with civil society in aid recipient countries as well as civil society and private sector in developed countries be incorporated not only in the discussion on the Paris Declaration but also in the country aid programmes (CAP) of Japanese ODA.
- NGOs have reached a conclusion that the Paris Declaration cannot be applied to NGOs, since it was formulated from the viewpoints of only donor countries and agencies. “Outcomes” should be measured by what is achieved in political and economic areas in a long run.

(MOFA)

- In terms of the actors to implement the Paris Declaration, there is no distinction between NGOs and governments; NGOs should discuss “outcomes” and agenda of the Paris Declaration as part of its actors. We cannot have productive discussions if NGOs consider the Paris Declaration as a matter only for OECD/DAC donors.

(NGOs/CSOs)

- Provided that the Paris Declaration is a framework stemmed from the

reflections of the failure of aid in Africa, reduction of transaction costs and aid modality are also important issues. We should not deny the contents of the Declaration, but need to further discuss it taking into account the current situation and weakness of the Declaration.

- In the education sector, lack of recurrent cost is a big challenge and budget support is useful in this respect. We should bear in mind the issue of aid modality when discussing “outcome.”

(MOFA)

- The scope of the Paris Declaration was trivialised by DAC aid specialists and became too technical and formalistic which discusses only aid procedures. We should place more emphasis on “outcome.”
- As an agenda for our next meeting, I would like to propose “aid for ownership” and also would like to invite NGOs to propose an agenda based on our meeting today. We will then discuss both agenda at the next meeting.

(NGOs/CSOs)

- I think there are other key issues that were not discussed today.

(MOFA)

- The next agenda should be based on the meeting today.

(NGOs/CSOs)

- We will propose a new agenda based on the discussion today, not bringing a completely new agenda. NGOs may need to coordinate among ourselves better.
- The way forward of the meetings was slightly different from what NGOs had thought, but we hope MOFA understand our position.

5. Closing Remarks (Mr. Kumaoka, representative from NGOs/CSOs)

- The Paris Declaration may have best fit into the situation when it was launched, but I think there are some shortcomings now. GOJ and NGOs need to further discuss ownership, including its definition which is yet to be agreed by the both sides. We (NGOs) would like to have an opportunity to internally discuss the agenda from our side for the next meeting, including the participation of civil society. I also think that the both sides need time to read the draft AAA thoroughly. Thank you.

This summary minutes was produced jointly by MOFA and NGOs/CSOs.

This English translation was prepared by NGOs/CSOs and not authorized jointly with MOFA.

(end)