



*Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations*

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Statement by Ambassador Jiro Kodera  
Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

Open Consultations on System-Wide Coherence  
United Nations General Assembly  
28 March 2008

Thank you, Mr. President.

First, I would like to join the other delegations in commending Ambassadors Kavanagh and Mahiga for their efforts to advance the discussion on system-wide coherence. Their duties have taken them to four pilot countries this month to gather much-needed empirical evidence for the ongoing debate.

At the high-level dialogue organized by UNIDO earlier this month, the Co-Chairs identified issues to be resolved and laid out a pragmatic and transparent course for moving ahead. Japan supports this course and praises them for their field trip reports.

The reports said that cost-saving has been realized to some extent. We must recognize that cost-saving itself is not the final goal but a result of seeking efficiency in programme activities. Japan believes that improving efficiency is a never-ending task for all of us, and in this regard welcomes further efforts of all stakeholders to improve the efficiency of programme activities.

Savings gained through boosting efficiency and reforming the UN system should be placed in an "Empowerment Fund" as recommended in the high-level panel report, and used flexibly to benefit people in need. If the UN financial system has any problems channeling reform savings into programme funding, Japan strongly hopes that they are resolved as soon as possible.

In seeking to achieve coherence in UN activities at the country level, we must keep in mind the following points.

First, national ownership of development activities and the leadership of programme countries are of fundamental importance, something which Japan has consistently emphasized. The UN and donors can help foster ownership and leadership by strengthening their partnerships for capacity development.

Second, a neutral Resident Coordinator system on the ground is essential. For their part, UN agencies must take greater ownership of the RC system at all levels.

Finally, steps must be taken to increase the incentive to carry out efficient programme activities, including instituting a fair system of personnel evaluation and channeling cost-savings directly to field activities.

Thank you.