

Speech by Ambassador Kaoru ISHIKAWA,  
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan  
to the Arab Republic of Egypt,  
on the Occasion of the Opening Session of Water Resources Conference

Fourseasons Nile Plaza Hotel, Cairo, 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2008

His Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Abdel Halim Abou Zeid,  
Minister of Water Resources and Irrigation,  
Dr. Abdel Moneim Seoudi,  
Chairman of Egypt-Japan Business Council,  
Prof. Dr. Mohamed Gaber Abou Ali,  
First Under Secretary for Culture Affairs and Missions,  
Ministry of Higher Education and State for Scientific Research  
Mr. Michitaka Ohta,  
Deputy Managing Director, Japan Cooperation Center for Middle East  
Distinguished guests,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is indeed a great honour and pleasure for me to attend this Water Resources Conference held by Egypt-Japan Business Council and Japan Cooperation Center for Middle East.

His Excellency Dr. Mahmoud Abou Zeid introduced me to Egypt. In fact, when I was working for late Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan, I had the honour that late Prime Minister introduced me to Dr. Abou Zeid, many years ago. You were both 'Guru' of water and later when the United Nations Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan established the Advisory Board on Water and Sanitation in 2004, H.E. Mr. Ryutaro Hashimoto assumed the Presidency of the Board and H.E. Minister Abou Zeid became a very important leading member of the Board.

Incidentally, at that time, I had no idea what so ever that I would become Japanese Ambassador to Egypt, cradle of human civilization born along the great river Nile, living proof of decisive importance of water for mankind.

Today, we are gathered here to further elaborate discussion about water resources both from scientific and commercial point of view. We can be revolutionary in the sense that Egypt is launching courageous 'scientific offensive' to overcome the natural limit of water. Science can dig new ditches, and industry can pour water in them. New water can even bring peace in the region, not only a mere betterment of life.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to take this opportunity to talk about the partnership between Egyptian and Japanese governments on the field of water resources.

Please look at the chart of the last page in the handout. Japan believes that water is a basic fuel to ignite nation building and farmers are the protagonists to materialize nation building. Based on this belief, my country extended humble hands of solidarity to Egyptian farmers to the betterment of water environment through Official Development Assistance, or ODA.

Our strategy is multifaceted: basically, we are trying to improve water supply to irrigation system in form of 34 floating pumps in Nile River between Luxor and Aswan, and water regulators between Beni Suef and Minya. Secondly, we help to improve water use efficiency through the introduction of ideas and then establishment by local farmers of 'Water Users' Organizations', which is, I believe, an incarnation of pro-active participation by ordinary people for betterment of their own life. I should also mention about agricultural mechanization centers where ordinary

farmers can rent tractors and other machines, which also serve as a leveling tools to heighten water efficiency.

We have been working to promote cooperation between Egypt and Japan in this important sector of water through these efforts. Today, in this conference, I hope that Egyptian companies and Japanese ones find chances to work together. I believe that industrial cooperation in water sector is one of the most promising result oriented actions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I know that in Africa, people say that "Water is life". Needless to say, human cannot live without water. Two thirds of human body's weight is composed by water. In addition, the earth where man lives is covered with water, and called "Planet of water", and we all know that "Egypt is the boon of the Nile". Having said this, as we all know, in spite of the apparent abundance of water, we can use only 2% of water on the earth. To further complicate the situation, water is unevenly distributed time-wise and geography-wise. This is the reason why not only the Japanese Government but also many authorities give top priority to water issues, and we are pursuing water and sanitation targets in Millennium Development Goals, or MDGs.

Above mentioned characters of water consist the main challenges to achieve MDGs. Among the eight MDGs' targets, the target No.10 "The ratio of people who cannot continuously use a safe drinking water and sanitary facilities will be reduced by half by 2015" is set. I am happy to say that Japan is leading the world in the field of "Water and Sanitation". It also bears 37% of the entire world ODA in water and sanitation sector. By far, Japan is the largest donor country (USA is the second with 20% bearing).

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year, 2008, is Japan-Egypt science and technology year. We, Japan and Egypt, have held approximately 30 events and seminars concerning the science and technology. Dr. Abdel Moneim Seoudi, not only as the eminent business leader in Egypt and as the Chairman of Egypt-Japan Business Council, but also as the very important brain to establish Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology and to pursue the year of science, always guides me and tells me about the importance of applied technology. The reason why this conference is added to the list of science and technology year lies here. Today's gathering embraces both scientists and business people. Thus, I sincerely hope that advanced science and technology of Japan combined with Egyptian wisdom and experiences will contribute to develop and improve further water environment in Egypt, to prove that Egypt is the boon not only of the Nile but also that of the applied science.

I may humbly add that this way will lead us to achieve the peace of the Middle East consequently.

I wish us all the best so that we can move forward together hand in hand to build better future for our children and grand children.

I thank you for your very kind attention.

**【Note】**

Rehabilitation of the Floating Pump Stations in Upper Egypt started in 1995 and the project of phase 4 is now being implemented.

Rehabilitation and improvement of regulators on Bahr Yusef Canal started in 1997 and the project of Monshat El Dahab Regulator has just been launched as the forth regulator in the middle of Egypt in this year.

A technical cooperation has been extended to establish Water User's Organization for better use of irrigation water in Nile Delta since 2000 and the project of phase 2.