

FOREWORD

The 50th anniversary of Japan Official Development Assistance in 2004 is an important milestone because of the tremendous significance of Japan ODA in Asia and the world as a whole, and because of important challenges and policy reforms that are starting to make their presence felt in Japan ODA. Provisional figures from the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation) show that Japan provided the second largest ODA in 2003 at \$8.9 billion. This is a slight decline from 2002 where Japan provided \$9.3 billion, putting it still at second place behind the United States. This is 0.23% of Japan's gross national income, which is equivalent to the weighted average of all donors for the same year.

Japan ODA remains controversial in the donor community because of issues of tied aid, extremely skewed loan-grants distribution, overcentralization of decision making, lack of transparency and so on. On the other hand, important changes are occurring in Japan ODA policy in terms of governance among others that make it even more important to take this Golden Jubilee as an important occasion to press for reforms long demanded by various Japanese, recipient country and international NGOs and people's movements.

In 2001, a Japan ODA reform campaign was launched by the Reality of Aid Asia-Pacific network towards the Golden Jubilee Commemoration. This campaign included the convening of workshops, conferences and fora besides the release of a number of publications addressing the issue.

This campaign culminated in conference in commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of Japan ODA held on October 6-8, 2004 at the RENGO headquarters in Tokyo. Organized by Reality of Aid Asia-Pacific Network through its members Pacific Asia Resource Center (PARC) and Japan — (JANIC), the conference was attended by RoA Asia Pacific members in Japan and around Asia as well as by other NGOs. The conference was followed by a hugely successful symposium at Sophia University, meeting with key representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, JBIC and JICA and symposia organized by the Japan ODA Reform Network in Kyoto and Hokkaido.

The Tokyo conference served as the main Asia-Pacific launch of the Reality of Aid 2004 Report on the theme "Governance and Human Rights in International Cooperation". The focus of the conference on governance of Japan ODA and its timing on the Golden Jubilee was very significant in relation to the focus of the Reality of Aid 2004 report.

Consequently, the conference drafted a statement entitled “Make Japan ODA Worthy of Public Trust and Support” reflecting the spirit and principles upheld by the conference for the Golden Jubilee celebration and proposing key reform proposals that were presented afterwards to a high level delegation of the Japanese government responsible for Japan ODA. The meeting resulted in concrete proposals for continued dialogue and action for policy reform.

This book constitutes the proceedings of that conference, incorporating papers that were presented and some others submitted. A number of important presentations to the symposium at Sophia University have not been incorporated for lack of time to secure available manuscripts. We are grateful to PARC which provided editorial work in collecting the papers. However, this publication was edited by the undersigned who is solely responsible for all editorial changes that have been made.

Reality of Aid Asia-Pacific is deeply thankful to PARC, JANIC and the Japan ODA Reform Network for their tremendous efforts in securing resources and organizing the conference and other events that formed a memorable critical celebration by civil society of the Golden Jubilee of Japan ODA.

The task of following up on this work to ensure implementation of commitments and realize the main proposals for Japan ODA reform need to be sustained in earnest. We hope that more citizens and organizations from Japan and recipient countries join our efforts to realize democratic reform of Japan ODA to make it truly an effective instrument to reduce poverty around the world.



Antonio Tujan Jr.
Chairperson
Reality of Aid