

THE TOKYO FORUM

13-15 MAY 1991



THE PROCEEDINGS

ON DEVELOPMENT

STRATEGIES FOR

LEAST DEVELOPED

COUNTRIES

IN THE 1990s

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INTRODUCTION

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These Proceedings on the Tokyo Forum have been prepared by the Tokyo Forum Secretariat. After the introductory comments, the statement of the chairman of the Forum, Mr. Saburo Okita, calls for renewed emphasis on global partnership, the primacy of the human factor in development, the need to release private initiatives and to provide adequate external resources for the Least Developed Countries (LDC). A proposal is made for assistance in enhancing participatory development.

After the synthesis statement of the Chairman, a series of selected analytical papers is presented. They focus on global issues such as the crisis in Sub-Saharan Africa, the resource and management needs of the LDCs and present in some detail more specific topics such as the potential of credit mechanisms and Export Processing Zones for accelerated development.

These proceedings are presented as a summary of the Forum. They are intended to capture the major themes and conclusions of the policy and technical discussions which took place, and they also make generally known the statements of good-will expressed by the various participants of the Forum.

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These proceedings are presented as a summary of the Forum. They are intended to capture the major themes and conclusions of the policy and technical discussions which took place, and they also make generally known the statements of good-will expressed by the various participants of the Forum.

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Appendix 1 notes over 300 participants and observers who attended the Forum. Appendix 2 lists a number of documents provided by the Forum participants. They are available upon request from the Policy, Planning and Evaluation Unit of the United Nations Capital Development Fund(UNCDF).

Forum Secretariat:

Mr. Susumu Fujimoto

Director, Economic Affairs Division
United Nations Bureau
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

Mr. Grégoire de Kalbermatten

Chief, Policy, Planning and
Evaluation Unit
United Nations Capital Development Fund

FOREWORD

.....

by H.E. DR. TARO NAKAYAMA

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan

The Paris Declaration and Programme of Action, adopted by the Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (UNCLDC) one year ago, called for a shared responsibility and strengthened partnership for the growth and development of LDCs. The Tokyo Forum on Development Strategies for LDCs in the 1990s, jointly organized by the United Nations Capital Development Fund and the Government of Japan, is a first milestone in this process.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, Japan stands ready to play its part in the concert of nations and to contribute to a new era of global partnership. All nations must together explore the avenues that will lead to the more prosperous, equitable and peaceful planet to which we all aspire.

The Forum presents a welcome opportunity to review strategic priorities for the development of the countries most in need of external assistance in the light of the significant events that have recently taken place in the international arena. It gives me great pleasure to host this Forum on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fund, a United Nations investment agency dedicated to providing early and direct benefits to the world's neediest people.

.....

We have entered a decade of transformation, a time of dramatic transition: the grip of old ideologies which hampered the sound management of economic and social resources is weakening. The relaxation of East-West tensions is paving the way for more harmonious North-South cooperation. Major political breakthroughs towards democracy have recently occurred in many LDCs all over the world. We may now hope that an improved macroeconomic framework will guide the agenda of change towards sustainable achievements for these developing countries in the 1990s.

Political progress must facilitate the mobilization of the international community to confront the awesome challenges on the ecological and socio-economic fronts. Debt burden, poor trade outlook and environmental degradation continue to darken the development prospects of the LDCs. Rising poverty levels, especially in Africa, threaten the very fabric of society. While discussing specific measures to revitalize the development of LDCs, we must remember that the people's own commitment, participation and dedication to the process of their nations' development will be the ultimate key to success.

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

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A Brief Account of the Forum's Background and Organization

By MR. REINHART W. A. HELMKE

Executive Secretary, United Nations Capital Development Fund

In 1991, The United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) is celebrating 25 years of existence dedicated, first and foremost, to providing grant small-scale assistance to the poor in the Least Developed Countries. At this juncture, *The Tokyo Forum on Development Strategies for the Least Developed Countries in the 1990s*, jointly organized by the Government of Japan and UNCDF, offers a fresh perspective on the development potential of these countries in an outgrowth of the Second United Nations Conference on the LDCs that was held in Paris in September 1990.

Much has changed in the 1980s in the LDCs, by and large, for the worse. We, at UNCDF, have witnessed with dismay as indicators worsened inexorably: deteriorating terms of trade, increasing level of indebtedness, slumping per capita income, decaying infrastructure, scattering urban slums amidst a perishing environment and widespread poverty. Yet, precisely because of the gravity of these deteriorating trends we must focus on the reasons for hope, however scant.

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At The Paris Conference it could be perceived that, with the end of the Cold War, the conditions for a renewed and more effective North-South partnership were materializing. A new generation of leaders is emerging in partner countries; they are facing these awesome challenges with great resolve and a new sense of pragmatism. Improved governance and the introduction of adequate policies might soon enable the participation and release the creativity of the people, a precondition for sustainable endogenous development.

This is not the time, however, for neglecting the external assistance requirements of LDCs in this crucial period of transition towards more democratic institutions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its investment arm, UNCDF, aware of the very nature of the grant aid they provide, stand ready to play an important role in this context, especially tailored to the specific needs of the LDCs. The Tokyo Forum is a privileged moment, an opportunity for us to work in concert and bring forward more concrete forms of international partnership.

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*In the days of the ancient gods
A mere seedling
This pine must have been.*

Matsuo Basho, Kyoto 17th Century

