

People's Charter on ODA

We regret the fact that Japan's present official development assistance (ODA) does not always bring about benefits to the lowest-income groups in recipient countries for their efforts toward improvement of life and self-reliance. We further regret that 1) ODA has caused increased debt to people in many recipient countries; 2) it has sometimes brought about destruction of life and environment, trampled on tradition and culture, promoted corruption among recipient countries, and played a reinforcing part in recipient governments under military rule or which infringe on people's human rights; and 3) formulation of policies and decision-making of ODA in Japan have been handled mostly by some statesmen, government officials, and private companies, structurally allowing them to make their own profits through collusive relationships and corruption. Therefore, we hereby make a conception of what ODA should be and suggest the following:

1. The sole reason for ODA's existence shall be that it is a means for correcting economic imbalance existing between the South and North; dissolving the relation in which the North has economically, socially, and culturally exploited material and moral properties owned by the South; and enabling both sides to build a mutually just, equal, and self-reliant relationship. In the future, contributions shall be given to make recipient people free from "donor-recipient" relations.

2. ODA shall be intended for the economically poorest and politically and socially marginalized sectors, i.e., lowest-income nations, lowest-income groups, cultural communities, women, children, handicapped people, refugees, displaced people, etc.

3. ODA shall be subject to certain guidelines which will lead to the break-up of existing structures in which lowest-income and most marginalized groups have been exploited, and to the realization of economic, social, and cultural independence. Therefore, these guidelines must not enhance further dependence on ODA among recipients.

4. ODA shall not impose donors' materialistic culture and mentality upon recipients, and shall respect the latter's own traditional and cultural values.

5. ODA must not be formulated and implemented by such limited groups among donor and recipient countries as statesmen, government officials, and private companies. Active participation of peoples in both countries shall be assured under an established system.

6. ODA shall keep such principles as peace, defense of human rights, democracy, and environmental protection. It must not cause to extend hostilities, strengthen infringement of human rights, and destroy democracy or harm the environment.

7. ODA shall be formulated and implemented with an agreement confirmed by recipient peoples and shall have long-term prospects for continuous growth. Primary evaluation on programs, monitoring, and evaluation during the course of implementation and assessment after

completion shall be fully carried out so that lessons learned can serve as inputs to future projects. Evaluations shall reflect recipient peoples' opinion and be according to fair assessment by independent third parties within both donor and recipient countries.

8. ODA programs, projects, and budgets shall be approved in donors' parliament through full and detailed discussion and assessment after which shall be fully and widely publicized both in donor and recipient countries.

9. Any information on ODA shall be made available to the public.

10. ODA shall be carried out not only within inter-government agencies, but also through various sectors, such as non-governmental organizations. In particular, the relationship between NGOs whose activities are intended for self-reliance in recipient countries should be given high regard.

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