



Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation

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**World and Regional Economic Developments -  
Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan**

Submitted by: Japan

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(Tentative Translation)

**STATEMENT BY  
HIS EXCELLENCY TARO NAKAYAMA  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN  
AT THE MINISTERIAL MEETING  
ON ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION  
(Canberra, Australia; November 6, 1989)**

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to say a few words at the opening of this first-ever Ministerial Meeting on Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

Like most of you, I would like to start by expressing my profound respects and heartfelt appreciation to Prime Minister Hawke and the Government of Australia for the hard work that they have put in over the past ten months to bring this meeting to reality.

This meeting in Canberra marks a historic step in the course of the Asia Pacific cooperation and I am delighted that so many Ministers from the region have come together to discuss our shared interest in promoting regional cooperation.

The whole world has been watching in wonder as this region has achieved its spectacular development, and people have been predicting for some time now that the 21st century will be the Asia Pacific age. We all know that today's development and prosperity have been underpinned by the free exchange of goods and capital and by vigorous personal exchanges and I do not need to remind you how the amazing advances in science and technology have contributed to expanded intra- as well as inter-regional partnerships.

Throughout history, the seas have symbolized mankind's hopes for freedom and adventure and young people have long been attracted by the promise of exotic encounters in unknown lands. Steeped in the spirit of exploration these people turned their encounters with different cultures into new inspiration and into the motivating force for new development. The future of our region is bright so long as we draw inspiration from the free spirit of these people and proceed with courage, not fearing being wrong. It is, I believe, incumbent upon the present generation to identify the impediments to further prosperity and development, to dismantle these barriers, and hence to enable our posterity to achieve its full potential.

Japan's development owes much to the input from the other countries of this region. In trade, investment, economic cooperation, and many other ways, Japan has enjoyed very close relations with the rest of the region, and I believe Japan has a responsibility to participate positively in this attempt for Asia Pacific cooperation and to contribute in whatever ways it can.

There is no need for me to reiterate here Japan's frequently expressed basic position on Asia Pacific cooperation. I would therefore limit myself to stressing two points.

The first is that Asia Pacific cooperation must be open. It should contribute to the development not only of the entire region but of the entire international community as a whole. In the trade field for example, Asia Pacific cooperation should be promoted in ways that contribute to sustaining and strengthening the global and free trading system.

The second point that I would like to stress is the importance of promoting this cooperation through step-by-step approaches in a wide range of fields, taking full account of the vast political, economic, and cultural diversity that characterizes this region. If this cooperation is to be promoted effectively, we must also promote mutual understanding among our diverse countries, and Japan thus hopes that this meeting will, in the future, also include consideration of ways and means to promote such understanding.

As this is the first ministerial meeting on Asia Pacific cooperation, it is imperative in my view to begin by having all participants put their ideas and initiatives on the table so that we can explore where our priorities for regional cooperation lie. In line with this, I would like to lead off by briefly mentioning some areas that I believe are important.

The first priority is that of moulding a shared outlook on the economic situation. A number of problems have been pointed out as having the potential to impede growth, among them the rising tide of protectionism, the economic and social distortions and misalignments generated by rapid growth, and the various physical and human constraints. Working through enhanced dialogue among economic policy-makers, we must find ways to overcome these impediments and to maintain and to build on our present prosperity.

The second priority is found in the imperative of further improving the climate for unbridled private-sector activity, for it is the private sector that has propelled this region's development. More than any other region, the Asia Pacific region has developed largely as a result of the expansion and improvements that scientific and technological advances have brought to our transportation and communications networks. In the early 16th century, it took Magellan about four months to transverse the Pacific. In the early 21st century the new high-speed container ships now on the drawing board will cover the same distance in only three or four days. Given the features that characterize this region, it is clear that all nations of the region should cooperate in further improving and expanding our transportation and communications networks — and that this will bring immeasurable benefits as the formidable Pacific Ocean is transformed into a friendly sea.

Our third priority is that of making a greater effort in human resources development which could be called "software" infrastructure vis-a-vis the "hardware" infrastructure of transportation and communication networks. The quality of our development ultimately depends upon the quality of our people, and it is axiomatic that not only government policy but also private business must seek to facilitate the broadest possible exchanges of expertise and technology and thereby to foster the kind of human resources needed for further development. Moreover, it is important that such exchanges should no longer be limited to a transfer from industrial countries to developing countries but involve all countries of the region — industrial and developing alike — making their experiences and expertise available for use in the most effective combinations possible. This must thus entail the creation of a network with the participation and cooperation of all countries of the region for the development of human resources that the region will require. I, therefore, offer for your consideration what I would call "the Asia Pacific Multilateral Human Resources Development Initiative".

Finally, we would be quite remiss if we were to ignore the importance of global issues. The global warming, the depletion of the ozone layer, the blight of acid rain, the pollution of our air and water, the devastation of tropical forests, and many other grave problems accompanying industrial and other development have no respect for national borders but impact upon the global environment surrounding us; and their solution is thus an urgent imperative for all mankind. It is also well-known that the Asia Pacific region is still facing various problems to be solved in such basic areas as population and medical care. I believe it would be most significant for us to deliberate what can be done to solve the environmental problems and what is the way of effective cooperation in these areas.

Each of these issues is both wide-ranging and profoundly complex, and each is fully worthy of debate at this ministerial meeting. Should the occasion arise, I would be pleased to explain the Japanese position on these issues at greater length later.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.