

**Japanese statement in response to Foreign Minister
of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Kassymzhomart Tokaev
(Special Permanent Council Meeting, October 27, 2006)**

1. The Japanese Delegation warmly welcomes His Excellency Foreign Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Mr Kassymzhomart Tokaev to the Permanent Council and highly appreciates his comprehensive report on the policy taken by the Kazakh Government including efforts towards democratization as well as social and economic development.
2. In the context of bilateral relations, then Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited Kazakhstan from August 28 to 29 this year. This was the first time for a Japanese prime minister to visit Central Asia. I would like to recall remarks by the Prime Minister during the meeting with H.E. Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbaev, since they clearly demonstrate Japan's policy towards Kazakhstan.
3. Then Prime Minister Koizumi said that this visit reflected Japan's intention to be more actively involved in the strategically important Central Asian region, and he paid tribute to Kazakhstan's political stability, rapid economic development, and balanced foreign policy. He added that

Japan will spare no effort in cooperating with Kazakhstan to promote democratization and the development of a market economy in that country. Furthermore, with regard to the dialogue “Central Asia plus Japan”, we were encouraged by the agreement by both leaders to develop this dialogue and to cooperate in the steady implementation of the Action Plan which was adopted at the Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Tokyo last June.

4. Japan considers Kazakhstan, which maintains political stability and continues its rapid economic development could become a locomotive for the development of the whole region. In this context, although Japan, as a Partner for Cooperation, is not in a position to participate in the decision making by the participating States on the Kazakh bid for the OSCE Chairmanship in 2009, we also welcome Kazakhstan’s aspirations to take on a leading role in the OSCE. We understand that the discussion on this issue so far reflects significant expectations towards Kazakhstan among OSCE participating States. Japan hopes that Kazakhstan will play a more responsible role in the OSCE through demonstrating achievements steadily in the field of democratization and protection of human rights to which the OSCE attaches great importance.

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