

Preface

2015 Japan's Democratization Assistance to Ukraine “Knowledge and Experience Sharing for Restoring Democracy”

1. Japan's Cooperation Package to Restore Democracy in Ukraine in 2015

In connection with Japan's democratization assistance to Ukraine in 2015, which consists of a cooperation package entitled “Seminar(s) on Knowledge and Experience Sharing for Restoring Democracy” (hereinafter called the “Cooperation Package”), this book contains the following items: 1) an overview of the total Cooperation Package plan; 2) lectures held at seminars in the Cooperation Package; and 3) papers dealing with analyses of the present situation of Ukraine conducted by Ukrainian researchers, the Ukrainian response to Japanese assistance, and an evaluation of the democratization process in Ukraine following assistance by Japan.

The Cooperation Package, implemented through the 2015 Japanese ODA budget, was a groundbreaking event in the history of Japanese assistance policy pertaining to the democratization process for a number of reasons. One reason is that the total amount of assistance provided by Japan to Ukraine in 2015 was the largest amount among countries including EU countries. Also, “restoring democracy” was established as one of the three important areas of assistance to Ukraine for the first time, alongside “improving economic conditions” and “promoting national dialogue and integration.”

A more important feature of the Cooperation Package was, however, that it was designed and implemented as one package. It systematically combined Japanese assistance for restoring democratic government in various areas including election administration, legislative management, functions of mass media, and anti-corruption efforts to Ukraine, which is one of the biggest countries in Eastern Europe in terms of area and population. Previously, Japanese assistance in the area of restoring democracy or democratization had focused on individual issues such as

strengthening legislative functions, preventing corruption, or administering elections. This assistance took the form of inviting delegates from several countries to Japan to share Japanese knowledge with them and introduce them to advanced theories in related areas. In contrast, the Cooperation Package to Ukraine was the first instance of a comprehensive, systematic cooperation package policy for building the democratic political system of a single country.

Another unique point was that the Cooperation Package targeted a country with an advanced level of development, both culturally and economically. This is not often the case with Japanese assistance in this area. Therefore, there were initial concerns on whether there would be any value in learning about Japan's post World War II experience in building up a democratic state, its current democratic structure, and theoretical levels of democracy formed by Japanese academic researchers, since Ukraine has an advanced economy, a developed society, well-organized parliamentary and administrative systems, and an integrated legal system.

In addition, Ukraine was part of the former Soviet Union, and considered a model state in the former communist bloc. Thus, there were also concerns as to whether Japanese assistance in restoring democracy would be effective in a country that is said to have inherited the deep-rooted legacy of a corrupt political culture from its communist past.

Some also expressing misgivings in the Cooperation Package at a time when Ukraine was politically insecure during its democratic restoration process and was involved in a serious trouble with Russia, which had taken control of Crimea and was exerting its political influence on the confusion in the two eastern regions. There were grumbings of doubt even within the assistance team itself on whether the Ukrainian side would really appreciate the experience and knowledge of Japan, which has succeeded in building a consistently peace-oriented nation with no wars since World War II.

Fortunately, these concerns turned out to be groundless apprehensions. The eagerness of the participants, who have a deep-rooted respect for learning as Ukrainians, a clear awareness of the seriousness of current issues, and a proactive attitude towards solving them, and above all, the strong will of the Ukrainian people to build a democratic political system were all factors that helped to make the Cooperation Package a success.

2. Cooperation Package Overview

As shown in Appendix 1 of this book, the Cooperation Package is a comprehensive program with the clear objective of establishing democratic governance in a well-developed country with a history of authoritarian rule.

First, two workshops were held at the Diplomatic Academy of Ukraine in the capital, Kyiv, both at the beginning and conclusion of the Cooperation Package. The kickoff workshop at the beginning of the Cooperation Package had two aims: 1) to ensure the Ukrainian side properly understood the intent and objectives of the Japanese side in implementing the Cooperation Package, and 2) to ensure cooperation from the Ukrainian side, particularly in the appropriate selection of participants for the seminars in Japan. The workshop featured speeches by a JICA specialist and two academics from Japanese institutions that were engaged in the planning and implementation of the Cooperation Package, followed by a panel discussion with the Ukrainian counterparts. The final workshop of the Cooperation Package also had two aims: 1) to build a common understanding between Japan and Ukraine through an evaluation of the Package, and 2) to utilize the Cooperation Package outcomes for future development in Ukraine and future Japanese assistance. The final workshop was composed of two parts: presentations by a Japanese official who ran the seminar in Japan and a Ukrainian political leader visited Japan to participate, which was followed by a panel discussion of both Ukraine and Japanese members to discuss and share ideas for future cooperation.

Second, between the two workshops in Kyiv, delegations of Verkhovna Rada deputies (political leaders), the Verkhovna Rada Secretariat (legislature), the Central Election Commission, senior-level government officials, and members from the media (mostly from broadcasting) visited Japan to attend invitation programs. Each team spent 8 to 14 days in Japan attending programs including lectures and discussions. They also visited the National Diet, Hiroshima, and the areas affected by the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster.

Third, in addition to these seminars in Japan, an anti-corruption seminar was held in Kyiv for mid-ranking government officials on corruption prevention and effective budget use as a follow-up to the seminars in Japan. Given Ukraine's hope to join the EU, European speakers from Germany and Poland also participated in the seminar.

Fourth, in order to ensure the impacts and the effects of the Cooperation Package were long-lasting, it was decided to publish a book in English and in Russian. The book features papers on the details of the Cooperation Package, written by the Japanese researchers who served as instructors in the seminars in Japan. It also contains papers on the current situation and issues faced by Ukraine as of 2015, as well as future developments, as analyzed by Ukrainian researchers. The book is intended to be utilized as a reference for similar cooperation packages for restoring democracy in the

future. It will be distributed to Japanese embassies and cultural centers worldwide with the hope that it will help others understand how Japan is assisting other countries in restoring democracy.

3. Features of the Cooperation Package Design and Implementation Scheme

In addition to the items listed thus far, a number of other schemes were used in the design and implementation of the Cooperation Package.

First, non-JICA, core staff for the Cooperation Package participated jointly with JICA staff from the initial phase, and were involved with needs assessments, and the designing and organizing of seminars. This resulted in content that was appropriate and efficient implementation.

Second, in order to share Japan's post-war experience in establishing a democratic government and rebuilding the country, a lecture entitled "Japan's Experience since the End of World War II" was scheduled for the beginning of the programs of all the teams that were invited to Japan. This allowed these teams to form a common base for future discussions by the opinion leaders in each field.

Third, theoretical lectures and technical lectures (workshops) were sequenced in the program as seminars in Japan, so that the bigger objective of establishing democratic governance and a more practical objective of corruption prevention could be effectively tied together and understood.

Fourth, lectures on the current situation of Japanese politics, its economy, and constitution were arranged for the initial stages of the seminars in Japan so that the participants could gain a proper understanding of Japan at present. Accordingly, the program overview was arranged as follows:

- 1) Introduction ("Japan's Experience since the End of World War II")
- 2) Current state of Japan
- 3) Theoretical lectures
- 4) Concrete, specialized technical lectures
- 5) Workshops, site visits
- 6) Debriefing ("Reflection")

Fifth, in order to ensure that Ukrainian participants could get the most out of the seminars, they were shown actual practices in application and not restricted to classroom lectures. For example, the members of the Central Election Commission had a chance to see the actual counting of ballots during Japanese elections.

Sixth, given that Ukraine has had to deal with the aftermath of the nuclear incident in Chernobyl, all teams but one (mass media team) visited Hiroshima, and the Verkhovna Rada deputy team also toured the affected areas of Fukushima.

Seventh, lectures on decentralization and local government were also included to assist in the formulation of future solutions for issues in the eastern part of Ukraine.

4. Issues Faced by Ukraine and Assistance in Restoring Democracy

In addition to the fact that Japan itself is a democratic state, the following concepts are the basis for Japanese assistance to Ukraine in the area of restoring democracy.

First, political stability is a crucial issue to Ukraine in terms of garnering international support for resolving conflict in its two eastern regions. It is only through showing the legitimacy of its ruling power by using a democratic procedure to establish an authority that Ukraine will gain international support.

However, Ukraine currently has two eastern regions in a state of conflict, and is thus less than stable politically. Theoretically, actual governability (i.e. real ruling power) cannot catch up with political capability, which is regarded as a necessity in the initial phase (i.e. take-off phase) of democratization. This gap between the necessary political capability and real governability cause political and administrative overload, resulting in social turmoil.

If Ukraine wants the support of the EU and the rest of the Western world, its only recourse in overcoming this political overload is through state-building efforts under a multi-party democratic system, not by initiating authoritarian rule, a military dictatorship, nor reviving the one-party system. How to pass through the critical stage of the initial step of democratization using a democratic political system is the issue Ukraine is currently facing, and this is exactly the reason why Ukraine needs assistance in restoring democracy.

The issue is how to improve democratic governance. Improving democratic governance requires the following conditions:

- 1) Establishing a political system based on the consent of the governed, i.e. understanding and acceptance of a democratic political system.
- 2) Eradicating corruption, i.e. the necessity to restore political authority (legitimacy of power) and make effective use of resources.

In order to resolve the problems with political overload, Ukraine needs to establish a legitimate political authority with support by the masses and eradicate corruption.

Support of the masses is absolutely essential in establishing a democratic government. Acquiring people's support requires both the eradication of the low-level corruption of low-level bureaucrats and the high-level corruption of political leaders. Public support cannot be obtained by eradicating low-level corruption alone. This is where the need arises for linking technical training on corruption prevention for practicing officials on the one hand, and training for institutional and organizational reform, including fiscal and media reform on the other.

Anti-corruption seminars to date by IMF and other Western European bodies have focused more on eliminating low-level corruption. In light of this, the Japanese assistance for restoring democracy and governance training additionally targets organizational reform and the eradication of high-level corruption. The Japanese method contrasts with IMF anti-corruption seminars on this point, which may be just what is needed.

The governance training or democratization assistance package should be balanced by and consist of the following three items: 1) efficient use of public funding (anti-corruption measures), 2) institutional reform for legislative and administrative organization, and 3) training in economic and financial policy to create sustainable economic policy.

One other thing that cannot be forgotten is the importance of the rule of law. Especially in assistance packages for restoring democracy in former socialist states such as the Cooperation Package to Ukraine, we must stress the importance of the rule of law. In former Soviet Union countries and similar socialist systems, the political culture dictates that the Party and Party Leaders are above the law. This, coupled with poverty, is what created the culture of corruption prevalent these societies. Given that this culture of corruption still prevails in Ukrainian society, lectures on the rule of law and constitutionalism in particular must be included in the Cooperation Package. The ideas of constitutionalism are based in the spirit of equality under the law, in which even those who have made the law must abide by it. They are also based on the principle that "a fundamental law, which is difficult to amend, is needed, because those who are in power tend to exercise it arbitrarily."

Even so, the veil of the culture of corruption as a legacy of the past era is so powerful that institutional reform alone cannot be expected to have any effect in uprooting it. The only way to eliminate this culture of corruption is through education in a broader sense, and in a more comprehensive perspective that includes activities by mass media and schools, and civil

action by intellectuals. With this in mind, the importance of education in establishing a democratic culture and political system cannot be stressed enough. We have high expectations for the high standard of education in Ukraine.

December 2015

Rei SHIRATORI,
President, The Institute for Political
Studies in Japan (IPSJ)

Keiichi HASHIMOTO,
Senior Advisor, Japan International
Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Maxim ROZUMNY,
Head, Political System Development Department,
National Institute for Strategic Studies (NISS)