

Statement by the Honorable KATAYAMA Satsuki
ADB Governor for Japan
at the Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of
the Asian Development Bank
(Samarkand, Uzbekistan, 4 May 2026)

1. Introduction

Chairperson of the Board of Governors, Mr. President, Governors, Ladies and Gentlemen:

On the occasion of the Fifty-Ninth Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB), I would like, on behalf of the Government of Japan, to express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the City of Samarkand for their warm hospitality. I also extend my heartfelt congratulations on the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of ADB, and pay the deepest respect to the achievements of the Bank and the dedicated efforts of its staff over many decades.

2. Japan's Expectations for ADB and Japan's Contributions

Developing Member Countries (DMCs) in the Asia and Pacific region continue to face growing uncertainty, driven by increasingly frequent natural disasters, public health crises, and heightened geopolitical tensions. At the same time, many countries are confronted with structural economic and fiscal vulnerabilities.

Against this backdrop, I would like to outline Japan's expectations for ADB, as well as Japan's contributions, focusing on five key areas.

(1) Building Resilience

First, building resilience against uncertainty.

Amid the current situation in the Middle East, many DMCs are facing elevated inflationary pressures and disruptions to economic activity resulting from supply constraints. In this context, Japan highly appreciates ADB's swift mobilization of a financial support package, including the Countercyclical Support Facility (CSF) and the Trade and Supply Chain Finance Program (TSCFP).

Beyond emergency responses, support for medium to long term resilience building is equally vital. Last month, Japan announced the Partnership on Wide Energy and Resources Resilience Asia (POWERR Asia)—a partnership of approximately USD 10 billion—designed to strengthen energy and supply-chain resilience across the region through a range of measures, including financial support in cooperation with ADB. Furthermore, as part of this initiative, Japan and ADB launched, at this Annual Meeting, the Action for Creating Energy Security for Long-term Resilience (ACCEL). These initiatives aim, in the short term, to support firms involved in energy-related supply chains, while promoting, over the medium to long term transition of energy systems in oil-dependent DMCs—

thereby contributing to regional resilience. Japan will continue to work closely with ADB to advance crisis response efforts.

In addition to ensuring stable energy supplies, securing resilient supply chains for critical minerals is also indispensable to building regional resilience. From this perspective, we highly appreciate ADB's timely efforts in formulating its strategy on critical minerals last year and, more recently, in launching the Critical Minerals-to-Manufacturing Financing Partnership Facility (CMM-FPF) to implement this strategy. Under this policy framework, we expect that support encompassing mid and downstream of the supply chain, including refining and manufacturing, will further advance industrial upgrading in DMCs while contributing to the stable global supply of critical minerals. Japan strongly shares this vision and will contribute twenty million U.S. dollars to this initiative. We encourage the active participation of like-minded partners. We also look forward to ADB further accelerating its support in the field of critical minerals through close collaboration with initiatives such as the World Bank's RISE Partnership.

(2) Regional Cooperation and Integration

Second, promoting regional cooperation and integration.

ADB's comparative advantage in this area—through strengthening connectivity and harmonizing rules—enhances resilience to uncertainty and underpins sustainable growth. Flagship initiatives such as the ASEAN Power Grid and the Asia-Pacific Digital Highway exemplify this approach, and Japan will continue to strongly support these efforts through the Japan Trust Funds.

This year, Japan, together with the Philippines, is serving as Co-Chair of the ASEAN+3 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors' Meeting, and is engaging in discussions on the regular agenda items—namely, the Chiang Mai Initiative Multilateralization (CMIM), the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), the Asian Bond Markets Initiative (ABMI), and Disaster Risk Financing (DRF)—with a view to further strengthening regional financial cooperation within Asia. In this context, we welcome the agreement to evolve ABMI, for which ADB serves as secretariat, into the Asian Bond and Financial Markets Initiative (ABFMI) under its next roadmap. We are also continuing discussions on cross-border digital payments, whose importance has been growing in recent years, in close cooperation with member countries and relevant institutions. We look forward to further progress in these areas.

Japan has long supported regional disaster risk financing initiatives, including the Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company (PCRIC) and the Southeast Asia Disaster Risk Insurance Facility (SEADRIF). This April, we welcome the establishment of P-PREPARE as a new trust fund through which contributions can be made to PCRIC, which provides disaster insurance to Pacific island countries. We also look forward to ADB playing a more proactive role in regional disaster risk financing through the recent transfer of the ASEAN+3 Disaster Risk Financing Secretariat to ADB.

Pacific Island Countries face unique vulnerabilities stemming from their small size, remoteness,

isolation, and oceanic nature, which necessitate differentiated approaches to support. We look forward to ADB further strengthening its assistance to the region, including through the increased use of regional procurement modalities. Japan also intends to take the opportunity of this Annual Meeting to co-chair the Third Japan–Pacific Islands Finance Ministers’ Meeting, at which issues such as correspondent banking relationships, disaster risk finance, and domestic resource mobilization have been discussed. Japan remains firmly committed to continuing its proactive support for Pacific Island Countries.

(3) Strengthening Private Sector Development

Third, strengthening private sector development.

Harnessing the dynamism of the private sector is essential for unlocking further regional growth. From this perspective, Japan strongly welcomes ADB’s firm commitment to a strategic shift in its operations toward greater emphasis on private sector development, with the goal of quadrupling private investment financing.

Japan will continue to support ADB’s so-called “PSD Shift” through initiatives such as the ADB Market Acceleration Platform for Asia and the Pacific (AMAP), which focuses on strengthening upstream enabling environment, and the Asia Pacific Project Preparation Facility (AP3F), which supports midstream project preparation. In particular, we highly value the strong track record of AP3F and have already made an additional contribution of five million U.S. dollars to the Facility this March. Japan also welcomes ongoing discussions between ADB and JICA on the Southeast Asia Emerging Entrepreneurs Kickstart (SEEK) initiative, aimed at supporting start-ups in the region.

(4) Strengthening ADB’s Institutional and Financial Capacity

Fourth, strengthening ADB’s own capacity to respond.

Japan highly commends ADB for significantly enhancing its lending capacity through amendments to its Charter, while strengthening risk management—thereby enabling the institution to respond more effectively to the region’s substantial financing needs. ADB’s record-high loan approvals of USD 29.3 billion last year, as well as the mobilization of approximately USD 50 billion in concessional resources under the thirteenth replenishment of the Asian Development Fund (ADF 14), represent major achievements.

Beyond financial capacity, organizational and institutional strengthening are also essential. Japan welcomes ADB’s reforms aimed at maximizing development impact through closer collaboration between sovereign and non-sovereign operations, as well as strengthened resident missions—thereby improving the environment that enables staff to fully demonstrate their capabilities.

(5) Cooperation among Multilateral Development Banks

Fifth, strengthening cooperation among multilateral development banks (MDBs) to maximize development impact.

Maximizing development impact requires not only greater volumes of support, but also higher quality. Japan highly commends ADB's reforms of its procurement approach, including the introduction of Merit Point Criteria—which evaluate quality in addition to price in international competitive bidding—and the mandatory use of local labor participation. We encourage ADB to further deepen procurement reforms in coordination with other MDBs and to build a strong record of concrete success cases.

It is also important that MDBs function as a system to enhance overall operational efficiency. The Full Mutual Reliance Framework between ADB and the World Bank contributes to lower transaction costs and faster project preparation in beneficiary countries. The approval of multiple jointly implemented projects since last year represents meaningful progress in this regard.

Japan welcomes ADB's leadership this year, as Chair of the Heads of MDBs Group, in strengthening cooperation among MDBs toward more efficient and effective development support.

3. Leveraging Japan's Knowledge and Expertise

To ensure that ADB's responses to these challenges translate into concrete project formulation and implementation, Japan will actively contribute not only financially, but also through knowledge and human resources. We would like to highlight several areas where Japan's expertise can be effectively leveraged.

(1) Quality Infrastructure, including Disaster Risk Management and Water

One key lesson Japan has learned from its long history of natural disasters is the critical importance of preparedness. It is essential to pursue a dual approach—combining hard measures, such as disaster-resilient infrastructure, with soft measures, including disaster preparedness planning and institutional and policy support. Recent disasters in the region have also underscored the importance of resilient, quality infrastructure investment as well as disaster risk management.

At the same time, demand is growing across the region for support in building safe, efficient, and resilient water systems. Japanese companies and local governments possess extensive expertise and experience in quality infrastructure in the water sector, including reducing non-revenue water, recycling sludge, and improving public health outcomes.

Japan will continue to promote quality infrastructure investment by leveraging Japan's knowledge and experience, in collaboration with ADB through AP3F, the Japan Trust Funds, and other instruments.

(2) Health

In the Asia-Pacific region, where societies are facing rapidly advancing population aging and emerging threats such as pandemics, universal health coverage (UHC) is critically important to ensuring social stability and achieving sustainable economic growth. Through the UHC Knowledge Hub based in Tokyo, Japan supports capacity building in developing countries, including Cambodia, Indonesia, and the Philippines, thereby promoting sustainable health financing—which is essential for the achievement of UHC—by strengthening collaboration between finance and health authorities. Going forward, Japan will work even more closely with ADB, which has deep knowledge of regional contexts, to ensure that countries can leverage the knowledge gained through the Hub to design and implement policies that address their health financing challenges.

(3) Domestic Resource Mobilization

Ensuring medium to long term fiscal resilience is also vital for achieving self-sustaining growth in DMCs. This requires countries to exercise ownership over development financing and strengthen their capacity for domestic resource mobilization (DRM). Japan contributes both financially and through human resources to ADB's Domestic Resource Mobilization Trust Fund (DRMTF), which also supports the Asia-Pacific Tax Hub (APTH), a platform for information sharing and policy dialogue in the tax area. As the largest donor to DRMTF, Japan urges ADB to continue supporting DMCs in strengthening DRM based on the medium-term strategy adopted last year, with particular attention to Pacific Island Countries that are often difficult to reach, and with enhanced collaboration with the IMF, the World Bank, and the OECD.

(4) Collaboration with Japanese Companies

Japanese companies possess extensive experience and high levels of expertise in areas such as quality infrastructure—including disaster risk management and water—and health. In mobilizing this expertise to address development challenges, the ADB Japan Representative Office (JRO) serves as a vital bridge connecting Japanese companies, ADB, and DMCs. Japan expects JRO to play an increasingly proactive role in this regard.

4. Concluding Remarks

Since assuming office in February 2025, President Kanda has demonstrated outstanding leadership and spearheaded numerous important reforms and initiatives. Japan looks forward to ADB's continued efforts, under the leadership of President Kanda, to tackle increasingly complex development challenges and to provide robust support for further growth in the region.

It is a great honor to welcome you next year, on the occasion of this milestone 60th Annual Meeting, together with Aichi and the Nagoya, where world-leading manufacturing and rich history and culture coexist. Nagoya and Tashkent entered into a Partnership City Agreement in 2019 and have since deepened cooperation across a wide range of fields, including culture, education, and tourism. Building on this strong partnership, I am confident that the achievements of the Samarkand Annual Meeting will be steadily carried forward to the Aichi-Nagoya Annual Meeting.

The 2027 Aichi-Nagoya Annual Meeting will present an exceptional opportunity to initiate discussions on the ADB's strategy for long term beyond 2030. As the host country, under the theme "Forging Partnerships, Driving Transformation," we aim to make this Annual Meeting a highly meaningful one—offering important guidance for discussions on the future of the Asia-Pacific region and of ADB. Japan will continue to work closely with all stakeholders and make every effort to ensure thorough preparations for the success of this historic Annual Meeting.

Thank you very much.