

North East Bamboo Workshop  
Welcome Address by Minister Kenko Sone

August 2, 2018

@ Bamboo and Cane Development Institute, Agartala, Tripura

H.E. Honorable Minister for Forest and Tribal Welfare, Government of Tripura,  
Dr. Alind Rastogi, PCCF & HoFF, Government of Tripura,  
Mr. Angshuman Dey, CEO&PD, Tripura JICA Project  
Ms. Kei Hasegawa, Japanese Bamboo Artist,  
Ladies and gentlemen, friends from all North Eastern States  
Good morning.

[Introduction]

I am delighted to visit this beautiful historical city of Agartala for the first time. As Japan attaches great importance to the North Eastern Region of India, it is my great pleasure to welcome you all to this Bamboo Workshop today. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region, Cane and Bamboo Training Centre, Tripura Forest Department and the concerned officials for organizing this workshop and yesterday's site visit. The site visit was a fantastic experience for familiarizing ourselves to the lives and works of local bamboo artisans and to the activities and achievements of Japan's cooperation related to bamboo, as well as an excellent factory to produce bamboo wood. Taking this opportunity, I would like to give you a brief overview of Japan-India relationship and explain where the North East sits in this picture.

[Cooperation of Japan in North East]

North East is the place where the "Act East Policy" of India and the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" of Japan converge and both countries are

working together by synergizing the policy and the strategy in this region.

In this regard, the development of the North East is an indispensable factor for the prosperity of not only India and neighboring countries but also of the entire Indo-Pacific region.

Japan has long been an active development partner in the North East. We have provided a variety of cooperation, ranging from road connectivity, electricity, water supply and sewage and other economic infrastructure. Furthermore, Japan also considers addressing the basic needs and livelihood of vulnerable communities as important as the development of large scale hard infrastructure.

For example, Japan provided the ODA loan for the first phase of “Tripura Forest Environmental Improvement and Poverty Alleviation Project” including several bamboo-related components. The project was successfully completed last year and we are conducting a survey for the feasibility of the second phase.

We established the “Japan-India Act East Forum” last December based on the agreement by the two leaders in September last year to further enhance Japan-India cooperation in the North East. The initiative puts relevant agencies from Japan and India together to discuss further cooperation in North East. Since its establishment, the Act East Forum has promoted the wide range of cooperation, including infrastructure projects, social development of vulnerable local communities and people-to-people exchange.

As part of our efforts to enhance cooperation in this region, Ms. Kei Hasegawa, a Japanese great bamboo artist has kindly travelled all the way from Oita, Japan to participate in this bamboo workshop here in Agartala, which is one of the largest bamboo producers in India.

[Objectives of this workshop]

This workshop has been materialized through the discussion in the Japan-India Act East Forum. The objective of this workshop is to share Japanese bamboo design and technique from Japanese artist with bamboo artisans of the region and contribute to the improvement of bamboo products of North East.

Furthermore, I also expect that the government officials will learn bamboo-related legal system of Japan and the existing bamboo-related cooperation between Japan and India. I hope you will have useful take-aways for the creation of better environment for those who are engaged in bamboo-related industry in each of the North Eastern States.

I wish this workshop will be one of important steps to further deepen the friendship between Japan and North East by accumulating cooperation in the region.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.