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## Japan told to boost ODA to become UNSC permanent member

NEW YORK -- Nations that hope to become United Nations Security Council (UNSC) permanent members, effectively Japan and Germany, should increase their official development assistance (ODA) to 0.7 percent of their GDP, a report said.

The U.N. Millennium Project, an expert panel working for Secretary General Kofi Annan and headed by Columbia University Professor Jeffrey Sachs, made the recommendation in its final report on Monday.

Japan now faces a tough hurdle to win a permanent seat on the UNSC because Tokyo's ODA compared to its GDP stood at 0.2 percent through 2003.

The report submitted to Annan by the Millennium Project said that developed countries hoping to earn a permanent seat on the UNSC should meet ODA commitments of 0.7 percent of GDP by 2015 as part of their global leadership responsibilities.

Tokyo faces pressure to achieve the ODA requirement because it needs support from developing countries in Africa and other regions, or recipients of ODA, to win a UNSC permanent seat, sources said.

"We face a tough situation," a Japanese diplomat said. Under the leadership of Sachs, more than 260 scholars, U.N. officials and politicians have jointly compiled the Millennium Project report.

Professor Sachs said that those targeting permanent seats on the UNSC should fulfill their responsibilities in the field of economic development because he said development issues and security matters go hand in hand.

Japan's ODA was some 8.9 billion dollars (917 billion yen), 0.2 percent of its GDP, in 2003.

Although European countries are increasing their ODA, Japan is reducing its contributions.

Japanese diplomats plan to tell the U.N. and member countries that a country's ODA contributions should be calculated on the total amount, not the rate of GDP.

The Millennium Project's report, which contains about 10 key recommendations, also proposes that the number of people who make only 1 dollar a day should be halved.

Secretary General Annan reportedly plans to announce his own sets of recommendations for ODA in March, based on the Millennium Project's report and another document he received earlier. (Mainichi Shimbun, Japan, Jan. 18, 2005)

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