



**ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. HIROFUMI NAKASONE  
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN  
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL EVENT  
ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS  
UNITED NATIONS, NEW YORK  
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Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Delegates,

It is a pleasure to have this opportunity to speak at the United Nations on behalf of Japan so soon after being appointed its Minister for Foreign Affairs. I would like to begin by assuring you that my country is determined to address the global challenge of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the very best of its abilities.

(The fight against poverty: the present situation and challenges)

Mr. Chairman,

Poverty is both the cause and consequence of poor conditions that exist in health and education in developing countries. MDG1, on the eradication of poverty, which is the theme of this roundtable, is not only one of eight goals; it is also a broader objective that encompasses all of the other MDGs.

According to this year's MDGs Report, the goal of halving extreme poverty by 2015 *is* within our reach. But there is a catch. Although the statistics have improved for the world as a whole, the number of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa is actually increasing. The impact of the steep rise in food prices is pushing as many as 100 million further into hardship. We often see conflicts and weak governance tying the hands of those who are striving to realize and sustain economic growth.

We must draw lessons from our efforts to date, and move forward. The MDGs offer us only a set of

benchmarks towards poverty reduction; it is up to us to devise ways of reaching that goal from next year on.

(Breaking the cycle of poverty and hunger)

Mr. Chairman,

This year, at the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD IV) and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, Japan marshalled the collective wisdom of the international community and led efforts to lay out strategies for development. In doing so, it consistently emphasized the following two concepts as the theoretical underpinnings for any successful endeavour to break the cycle of poverty and hunger.

The first concept is “human security,” which requires that our focus be on protecting individuals from threats and empowering them to realize their full potential. A corollary of that would be for us to pursue a multi-sectoral approach, whereby we seek synergies among development sectors such as health, water, education and gender. Another would be to stress a participatory approach, drawing strength from a wide range of stakeholders from developing countries, donors, and emerging economies to international organizations, private foundations, corporations, and academia.

The second concept, which really goes without saying, is that sustainable economic growth based on the ownership of developing countries plays a significant role in helping the “bottom billion” move up and prosper.

Underlying both these concepts of “human security” and “growth” is our firm belief that people should be allowed to carve out their own futures in their own ways. The international community should take these perspectives into account in working together to tackle development challenges.

(Looking beyond 2008: Japan’s efforts)

Mr. Chairman,

Japan comes to today’s high-level event with a number of initiatives that we have set out at TICAD

IV and the G8 Summit. Allow me briefly to outline some of them.

I think that many of the distinguished participants here recall Japan's announcement that it would double its ODA to Africa by 2012, in order to support the African continent, which has begun to demonstrate its potential as a land of hope and opportunity, albeit with the sub-Saharan region making slower progress towards the MDGs.

Japan has responded to the rise in food prices by announcing, and steadfastly implementing since January, emergency assistance for about 300 million dollars – and it will consider doing more. Also, in the longer run, Japan will work to increase agricultural production, building the capacity of 50,000 people and striving to double rice production in African countries over the next ten years.

Multi-faceted efforts are needed in order to adequately address poverty, and Japan will be making just such efforts, taking comprehensive measures in health, education, and water and sanitation. It has already committed to training 100,000 health workers in Africa, and pledged an additional 560 million dollars to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the coming years. Japan has committed to training 300,000 teachers mainly in math and science, one-third of them in Africa, while also announcing that it would construct 1,000 schools and provide safe drinking water to 6.5 million people in Africa.

(Conclusion)

Mr. Chairman,

The wish all of us in the international community share is not merely to survive for another day but to create a world filled with hope that we can hand over to the next generation. Attaining the MDGs by 2015 is a challenging, but an achievable, task. To that end, Japan stands ready to do its part, steadily delivering on the commitments that it has made.

Thank you.