



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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**Address by H.E. Mr. Masahiko Koumura
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
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New York**

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, let me join other delegates in congratulating Your Excellency Dr. Srgjan Kerim on your assumption of the Presidency of the General Assembly. I would also like to pay high tribute to Her Excellency Madam Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa for her leadership during the last session. My high appreciation goes as well to Secretary-General Ban, for his dedication and initiative in addressing the many challenges confronting the United Nations.

In the face of new challenges, the United Nations needs to transform itself, from “forum” to “actor”. The demands of the 21st century call for the creation of a United Nations that is proactive. I commend the Secretary-General’s determination to bring about this change. It is no coincidence that, given the current international environment, Japan also has embarked on a proactive foreign policy. With our approaches thus in harmony, Japan and the United Nations can and must work together.

In my remarks this evening, I will emphasize two areas in which the cooperation between the two actors may be optimized: climate change and African development. I will also touch on the need for UN reform, notably the reform of the Security Council, so that the United Nations may address these missions effectively.

Mr. President,

In the era of globalization, the international community has come to face new challenges that

reach across borders. In particular, climate change will be a crisis for all humanity, not only the people of today but also the generations of the future. Now is the time for all of us to take action for future generations, giving special consideration to vulnerable countries. Let us leave behind discord and division among nations, and shift gears to combine our efforts in order to face this common challenge. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has indicated that the fact of global warming is "unequivocal", world leaders have the responsibility to make bold new political decisions to address this growing challenge.

With such responsibility in mind, Japan presented a new proposal on climate change in May and has proposed that we collectively embrace a long-term vision for developing innovative technologies and building a low-carbon society. Japan has also called for a mid-term strategy for a new framework that includes all major emitters of greenhouse gases. We need to tackle climate change without pause up to and beyond 2012. In this regard, I highly commend the political commitment expressed by world leaders at the high-level meeting held on 24 September under the initiative of the Secretary-General. Japan, for its part, will contribute to the negotiations for an international agreement through the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit to be held next year, and will feed the results back into the UN process.

Japan has gained in international competitiveness by improving energy efficiency and decreasing oil consumption during a period in which its GDP doubled. We are ready to share our technologies and experience which hold the key to achieving environmental preservation, energy security and economic growth in tandem.

At the same time, each and every one of us needs to move forward from mere ideas and reconfigure our own way of life. Japan is promoting a new national campaign aimed at reducing the CO₂ emissions of individual households, in addition to the introduction of the "Cool Biz" (casual dress code) initiative. The spirit of "mottainai" (rejecting wastefulness) and the "3R Initiative to Reduce, Reuse and Recycle" also contribute to this aim. It is my intention to globally broaden the campaign to restructure our lifestyles. To this end, my government values exchange with corporations, academics, NGOs and various other actors in public fora, while at the same time cooperating with the UN Global Compact.

Mr. President,

Another priority area for Japan is African development. Africa as a whole is now undergoing positive change. Peace is being consolidated in several former conflict areas. Meanwhile, many countries, both with and without natural resources, are growing robustly.

For Africa to become a more vibrant continent, a continent of greater hope and opportunity, three things are particularly important, in addition to the prevention and resolution of conflicts.

First and foremost, economic growth must be enhanced and sustained. Second, human security needs to be ensured through the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the consolidation of peace and the establishment of democratic governance. Finally, the issues of the environment and climate change must be addressed.

Japan will host the fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in Yokohama next May. TICAD, whose first meeting was held in 1993, is a process open to all. The TICAD process places particular importance on African ownership and true partnership with the international community. The three areas that I have just mentioned will be the focus of the discussion at TICAD IV, which will present a fresh opportunity to mobilize the knowledge and resources of the international community for African development. South-South cooperation between Asia and Africa will remain a key feature in the TICAD process.

Without peace in Africa, the world at large will not enjoy peace and prosperity. Japan cannot ignore the situation in Darfur. Faced with the world's worst humanitarian crisis, Japan has provided assistance amounting to approximately eighty-five million US dollars. Japan also welcomes the establishment of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and looks forward to its early deployment as well as to steady progress in the political process in Darfur. Japan intends to further enhance its contribution for the consolidation of peace and stability in Africa.

Mr. President,

Peace paves the way for development and human security. However, achieving peace is not an easy task. Iraq, for example, is struggling to achieve security and reconciliation, and the foundation for peace remains weak. Japan has been assisting the reconstruction efforts of the Iraqi people by such measures as dispatching its Self-Defense Forces and providing ODA of up to five billion dollars.

To help in the reconstruction of Afghanistan, Japan has played a leading role in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) and disbandment of illegal armed groups (DIAG), working in close cooperation with the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Japan hosted the DIAG Conference in Tokyo in June this year, to contribute to the rebuilding of Afghanistan through joint efforts with the United Nations.

To build peace, it is essential for the international community to ensure a seamless and comprehensive effort to fulfill tasks ranging from resolving conflicts to assisting reconstruction. As the current Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Japan is resolved to make a significant contribution to such international efforts. One concrete measure that has been taken is the

launch of the Hiroshima Peacebuilders Center, to train civilian experts in Asia to better respond to various needs on the ground.

Free and fair elections and democracy are also essential for the consolidation of peace. Japan spares no effort to provide assistance in order to promote democratization. Japan has dispatched election-observer missions to a number of countries, including Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone. Japan has also provided election-related support and dispatched arms monitors to Nepal.

It is extremely regrettable that the crackdown on the demonstrations in Myanmar has caused casualties, including the death of a Japanese citizen. Japan calls on the Government of Myanmar to exercise utmost restraint and to refrain from the use of oppressive force. Japan demands that the Government of Myanmar make every effort to resolve the situation through dialogue.

Along with democracy, the rule of law helps to lay the groundwork for peace and prosperity. To promote the rule of law in the international community, Japan will accede to the International Criminal Court (ICC) next month, while helping to improve legal systems in developing countries.

In order to give proactive support to the norm-setting role of the United Nations, Japan signed the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance in February this year, and today I have signed the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Mr. President,

Behind these endeavors lies the conviction that the international community must cooperate in addressing international challenges based on fundamental principles such as freedom, human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The primary pillar of such fundamental values is respect for human dignity. The issue of abductions by the DPRK poses a serious challenge to human dignity. It is essential that the international community send a strong message calling for the earliest resolution of the abduction issue, so that the victims and their families may reunite and have an opportunity to recapture their former happiness. Japan will continue to work toward the resolution of this issue as well as the settlement of the issues of the "unfortunate past" through dialogue in accordance with the Pyongyang Declaration. Hoping for the improvement of the human rights situation, Japan will also pursue the adoption of the resolution on the situation of human rights in the DPRK at this session of the General Assembly.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery is another

challenge that requires the undivided attention of humankind. From this point of view, I welcome that the Security Council has adopted by consensus a series of resolutions on the DPRK and Iran. It is now up to all of us to translate the will of the international community into concrete action through full implementation of the relevant resolutions. Japan will continue its efforts to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through the Six-Party Talks. Japan will also continue to urge Iran to heed the unanimous voice of the international community and suspend its enrichment-related activities.

Nuclear disarmament should receive no less attention. I reiterate here the determination of my country to reinforce international efforts for nuclear disarmament, as the only country in the world that has suffered nuclear devastation. Japan will again submit a draft resolution at this session of the General Assembly to map out concrete measures toward the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The issue of terrorism also requires sustained efforts, as it becomes increasingly more complex. In this regard, Japan welcomes the adoption of UN Security Council resolution 1776. For our own part, we will make efforts to continue our refueling activities in the Indian Ocean, to fulfill our role as a responsible member of the international community. Japan also supports the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Furthermore, to strengthen the legal framework to counter terrorism, I call upon every State to exercise utmost flexibility for an early conclusion of the negotiations on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Mr. President,

In the face of various threats to international peace and security, the Security Council has come to play a more relevant role than ever before. For the Security Council to live up to its expected responsibilities, we need to make it more representative and effective.

I therefore renew Japan's determination to pursue an early reform of the Security Council with the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent memberships.

As has been reiterated time and again, no reform of the United Nations will be complete without the reform of the Security Council. The momentum for such reform, renewed by former President Al Khalifa, must be strengthened as we enter the 62nd session. All Member States must work together so that we can achieve concrete results through inter-governmental negotiations during this session.

Mr. President,

What is required today is not to wait for change, but to bring it about. The question is not what to expect of the United Nations, but how we may revitalize the Organization.

We need to enhance the capacity of the United Nations to deal with new challenges. In addition to striving to realize the reform of the Security Council, Japan will actively engage in efforts to strengthen the UN's ability to maintain international peace and security. Japan also supports the ongoing endeavors to enable the United Nations System to work more coherently and effectively in the areas of development, humanitarian assistance and the environment, as well as in the field of human rights. At the same time, we need to achieve concrete results in management reform.

In this connection, let me remind the Member States that world leaders took a major step forward in 2005 by resolving to delete the long obsolete "enemy State" clauses from the United Nations Charter at the earliest opportunity.

Next year, Japan will take center stage in such international efforts. At TICAD IV in Yokohama and the G8 Summit at [Lake] Toyako, Japan will set forth principles for dealing with imminent international challenges. I hope to bring back solid results to New York a year from now. Let me conclude my remarks by renewing Japan's unwavering commitment to work in close cooperation with the United Nations to change the world for the better.

Thank you very much.