

ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. NAOTO KAN  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN  
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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency Mr. Joseph Deiss on assuming the Presidency of the sixty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly. I also express my appreciation to His Excellency Dr. Ali Abdussalam Treki for his efforts in the previous session. I would like to express my respect as well to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership.

Sixty-five years ago, at the time of the United Nation's creation, Japan, in its post-World War II state, faced challenges similar to those confronting the developing countries today. In overcoming these difficulties, Japan received considerable assistance from the international community. Therefore, Japan has special interest in the achievement of the MDGs, which is the main theme of the General Assembly this year.

At this time, the international community is facing a series of challenges that include poverty, hunger, infectious diseases, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, regional conflicts, and global environmental issues.

I am deeply honored to be given this opportunity to speak to you about my thinking on the role today's Japan should play in the international community, based on its experience.

I should like to begin by sharing with you an idea that I hold dear. I firmly believe that the primary role of the leader of a country should be to create a society in which human suffering is reduced to a minimum. I believe that it is the duty of all political leaders to minimize to the extent possible sources of human suffering such as poverty, disease and conflict.

I shall now discuss Japan's concrete contributions, guided by this idea, in four areas: assistance to the developing countries, the global environment, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Mr. President,

The first area of contribution is assisting the development of the developing countries.

After the Second World War, Japan achieved economic reconstruction owing in part to assistance from the international community. Later, through rapid economic growth, Japan became one of the major economic powers. With such history behind, Japan cannot overlook the realities of the world today where a billion people suffer from hunger, nearly one million people die each year of malaria, and poverty keeps some 72 million children out of school. Japan attaches a great importance to achieving the MDGs.

I attended the MDG High-level Plenary Meeting the day before yesterday and announced the new contributions in the health and education areas as the "Kan Commitment". Behind this initiative is my earnest desire

to save all infant lives and to let every child go to school. We will provide 5 billion US dollars in health assistance and 3.5 billion US dollars in education assistance over the course of five years. Our commitment in the area of health includes a contribution of up to 8 hundred million US dollars to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Assistance in the area of education will provide high-quality environment for education to more than 7 million children.

Japan will continue to work comprehensively on development assistance in accordance with the concept of human security and lead the efforts of the international community towards meeting the MDGs. As a part of these efforts, Japan proposes to convene an international conference in Japan next year in order to strengthen the coordination among a broad range of stakeholders, including governments, international organizations and NGOs, and follow up on the High-level Plenary Meeting.

Reinforcing assistance to Africa, in particular, where the progress toward the achievement of the MDGs is slow, is one of the priorities of the international community. Attaining the MDGs in Africa is an important pillar of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) process. Japan is enhancing its efforts in fields such as health, water and sanitation, education and food. In order to steadily implement our commitments made at TICAD IV, including the doubling of our ODA and providing support in order to double private investment to Africa by 2012, Japan will continue and strengthen its assistance.

The second area of contribution is the global environment.

At the UN Summit on Climate Change last year, Japan announced the target of reducing its emissions by 25 percent by 2020, if compared to the 1990 level, premised on the establishment of a fair and effective international framework in which all major economies participate as well

as their agreement on ambitious targets.

Small island developing States are in peril of submerging under water in the future because of the global warming. Saving these countries from their predicament is among the reasons why we should address the issue of climate change with greater sense of urgency.

Aiming at adopting a new and comprehensive legally binding document, Japan will continue to coordinate with other States and the United Nations to lead international negotiations for the success of COP 16 at the end of this year. We will also steadily support developing countries that are vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change and those that are taking mitigation measures such as reducing emissions, through partnership between the public and private sectors.

Next month, COP 10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, with the theme, “Living in Harmony with Nature”, will be convened in Nagoya, Japan. At this meeting, we must come to agreement on commencing new actions in order to halt the rapidly progressing loss of biodiversity. The biggest challenges in this field are setting a common global action target and establishing a new international regime in the area of Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) as related to genetic resources. As chair of the meeting, Japan is determined to play an important role in these efforts.

Mr. President,

The third area of contribution is nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

I believe that invention of the nuclear weapon and subsequent threat to the survival of the human race being man’s doing, the solution to the

problem must be within the reach of man's effort. Japan, as the only country that has ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombings, has the moral responsibility to take concrete steps to realize a world without nuclear weapons. Japan will be at the forefront of the international effort.

Every year for the past 65 years, Hiroshima and Nagasaki have each held memorial ceremony in earnest desire to realize a world without nuclear weapons. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon visited Japan in August this year and was the first UN Secretary-General to attend the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Ceremony and visit Nagasaki. I would like to thank the Secretary-General once again for making this visit. At the Hiroshima ceremony, a representative from the United States was also in attendance, along with the representatives of other countries. I very much welcome that decision, which will contribute to raising the momentum towards a world without nuclear weapons.

Japan bears a responsibility to all humankind to hand down to future generations an awareness of the catastrophic nature of nuclear weapons. With this objective, I decided to appoint atomic bomb survivors, known in Japan as *hibakusha*, as "Special Communicators for a World without Nuclear Weapons", and to ask them to send out messages to the world about the horror of the use of nuclear weapons and the value of peace that only those with firsthand experience can convey. Japan will coordinate with other countries and civil society to promote education on disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

Last December, Japan submitted a draft resolution entitled, "Renewed determination towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons", which was subsequently adopted in the General Assembly, with the United States as a co-sponsor for the first time. Japan is determined to continue its efforts to strengthen the trend of broadening support for the resolution in the international community.

Steady implementation of the agreement of the NPT Review Conference in May is essential. Japan and Australia have co-hosted a Foreign Ministers meeting on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation with like-minded countries on the occasion of the opening of the new General Assembly session and launched a new group dedicated to working towards a world without nuclear weapons. We intend to deepen discussions on reducing the role and number of nuclear weapons in the world.

Here, I must make reference to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran.

The DPRK's nuclear and missile development programs pose a threat to the entire international community. Japan urges the DPRK to take concrete actions in accordance with the series of relevant Security Council resolutions and the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks. Moreover, steady implementation of the resolutions by all Member States is essential.

Japan has not altered its intention to comprehensively resolve the outstanding issues of concern, settle the "unfortunate past" and normalize relations in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. Towards that end, it is absolutely indispensable to resolve the abduction issue. If the DPRK takes constructive and sincere steps such as implementing its agreement with Japan, Japan is ready to respond in kind.

On the Iranian nuclear issue, it is important for the international community to work in unity to implement firmly the relevant Security Council resolutions and to urge Iran to take realistic decisions. Japan will continue to urge Iran to make efforts to dispel the suspicions of the international community. We will also work together with the international community for a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of this issue.

The fourth area of contribution is peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Japan, which underwent reconstruction from the destruction of war and achieved economic growth, is deeply aware of the preciousness of peace. Our efforts in the areas of peacekeeping and peacebuilding are a manifestation of our determination to act proactively toward achieving true peace.

There is a common assumption that peacebuilding activities aimed at promoting health and education, industrial development and employment are to begin after peacekeeping is concluded. However, in order to realize true peace, it is imperative to work on peacebuilding efforts in tandem with peacekeeping activities from the earliest stages of the latter.

In April this year, as President of the Security Council, Japan hosted an open debate of the Security Council on post-conflict peacebuilding. Japan will make efforts to advance this seamless approach for peacebuilding in the world, based on the perspective of human security.

In Haiti, which was devastated by unprecedented damage following the tragic earthquake earlier this year, a team of engineers from Japan's Self-Defense Forces is actively contributing to the UN PKO recovery efforts. In flood-hit Pakistan, we currently have helicopters of the Self-Defense Forces providing assistance as an International Disaster Relief Team. For Timor-Leste, we recently made a decision to send military liaison officers to the UN PKO on the ground. Japan will continue to actively participate in UN PKOs and disaster relief operations.

Furthermore, we will make concrete efforts in such areas as investing in peace using ODA, providing assistance to PKO training centers and developing human resources such as training of civilian peacebuilding experts in Asia.

Among all places in the world where peacebuilding efforts are under way, Afghanistan, in particular, is at crucial stage. It is Afghanistan that poses the greatest challenge for the international community in terms of peacebuilding, and it is to Afghanistan that Japan is providing its most intensive assistance.

Japan, together with various partners, has supported the Afghan Government's efforts in a comprehensive and integrated manner, focusing on three pillars: improvement of security including police training, reintegration through vocational training for former Taliban rank-and-file soldiers and job creation, and sustainable and self-reliant development through agricultural assistance and similar strategies.

Japan will cooperate with the Republic of Turkey in assisting Afghan police training by providing funding as well as police personnel, with a view to improving security in the country. We also recently disbursed 50 million US dollars in assistance for the reintegration of insurgents. Japan will provide its assistance in such a way that the people of Afghanistan will be able to perceive tangible improvement in their livelihood.

Mr. President,

I wish to stress the importance of UN reform.

The United Nations is the only universal international organization with the goal of promoting world peace and prosperity. Ensuring a functional UN that is capable of effectively addressing diverse global issues is of the utmost importance.

To that end, all Member States must work proactively to promote structural reform and functional reinforcement of the UN. The United Nations, for its part, must continuously maintain the understanding and

trust of Member States by ensuring its own transparency and accountability.

For the UN to perform effectively towards resolving global challenges, the role of the Security Council is particularly important. And for the Security Council to be effective, it needs to have legitimacy, by reflecting the current realities of the international community. In that regard, reform of the Security Council is indispensable.

I believe that Japan, as the only country that has ever suffered the devastation of atomic bombings and as a country that does not possess nuclear weapons, is well-suited to play a role in the Security Council in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. I wish to express once again, at this General Assembly, Japan's determined aspiration to take on further responsibilities for international peace and security as a permanent member of the Security Council.

Mr. President,

Japan is confronted at this time by various social and economic problems including an aging society, fiscal problems and energy dependency on other countries. These problems can be called common agenda for the world as many countries will face them sooner or later. I think it would be a good idea if Japan were to formulate solution models for these problems on the basis of its effort to meet them and present such models to the world. Japan is determined to boldly meet the challenges that it faces.

Mr. President,

Compared with the magnitude of the responsibility we bear to the future mankind, the differences that divide nations are not great. I am

convinced of that. All rests on the decisions and actions we take today. Let each one of us take that thought to heart as we begin the new session of the General Assembly and seek to achieve good results in our deliberations.

Thank you.