



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. YOSHIHIKO NODA
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN
AT THE SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

23 September 2011

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to begin by congratulating His Excellency Mr. Al-Nasser on his assumption of duties as President of the 66th session of the United Nations General Assembly. I express my gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Deiss, the former President, for his devoted efforts during his tenure as President. I would also like to pay my deep respect to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban for his leadership.

This has been a year of extraordinary challenges for Japan. A little more than six months have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake struck Japan. Nearly 20,000 people were killed or remain missing, and nearly 40,000 who were forced to evacuate even now continue to endure inconvenience in their daily lives. I am truly proud to see the noble spirit of the Japanese people manifest itself even amid such despair and hardships. At the same time, I have been deeply moved by the strong feelings of compassion shown by people the world over toward Japan. There are many unforgettable stories.

Ms Rita Retnaningtyas, an Indonesian nurse candidate and trainee at the Miyagi Hospital, evacuated 120 patients from the hospital to a safer location just before the arrival of the tsunami. She herself stayed on at the hospital for several days, taking care of the patients in the absence of electricity and water supply.

In Brazil, the children of a small rural town collected change and sent their contribution to us in a tin can. I heard that, when asked why, one of the children

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answered that it was because Japan, a friend of Brazil, was suffering.

University students in Kenya gathered in Nairobi in memory of Japanese victims of the earthquake. They sang in chorus the popular Japanese song known outside Japan as “Sukiyaki”, whose original Japanese title reads, “Let us walk looking up”, saying that they wished to deliver the song to the Japanese people.

These are only a few such stories among tens of thousands. The world expressed friendship and solidarity as well as praise for the Japanese people immediately after the earthquake. On behalf of the people of Japan, I express my heartfelt gratitude for the helping hands extended from all over the world. These bonds between Japan and the international community will be forever remembered by the Japanese.

Since the 11th of March, the sounds of recovery have been echoing throughout the Tohoku region of Japan. The Government of Japan has been exerting all efforts to restore and reconstruct the disaster-affected areas. The daily lives of those outside the affected areas, including the metropolitan area of Tokyo, have almost returned to normal. The infrastructure and economy of the coastal areas of Tohoku, which were washed away by the tsunami, are recovering. Damaged supply chains are close to full restoration. We have been sharply reminded of the role that Japanese companies, including small and medium-sized enterprises, play in sustaining the growth of the global economy.

We are making steady progress towards securing stable control of the situation at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Stations of the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO). Currently, we are focusing our efforts on moving up the existing target period to achieve cold shutdown status by the end of this year. A number of other challenges remain to be addressed, including removal of debris and rebuilding of the livelihoods of the people in the affected areas. We will continue to be fully engaged in the efforts for restoration and reconstruction, as our highest priority task, so that Japan’s renewal can be realized without delay.

Mr. President,

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As the new leader of Japan, I am deeply honored to discuss and share Japan's ambitions for the world's future as well as Japan's diplomatic vision with all those in attendance here today at the United Nations General Assembly. The world is now undergoing tremendous changes, including those now under way in the Middle East and North Africa. These changes have been brought about through the aggregate consciousness of all individuals who have awoken. In its experience of the massive earthquake in March, Japan became newly aware of the importance of bonds with the people of the world. We have come to realize fully how important the responsibility to be fulfilled by each individual is to a society. We have never felt more strongly the significance of promoting human security. I am resolved to implement Japanese diplomacy working hand in hand with the all of the world leaders here at the United Nations, with the determination to make a substantive contribution to overcoming the challenges the world is facing and to shaping a brighter future for humanity.

Mr. President,

Allow me to touch upon Japan's efforts for the growth of the world economy.

Japan has a long history of assisting developing countries in building wealthy societies through nation-building efforts and human resources development. Japan understands very well from its own experience that the engine of economic growth is a strong middle class. To strengthen the middle class, it is necessary to construct a social foundation upon which all individuals can enhance their capacities and develop them to the fullest. From this perspective, Japan will continue to support developing countries through the active utilization of its ODA.

We must not let the current global economic uncertainty and financial unrest hamper the efforts of the international community toward growth. It is vital that all countries cooperate in order to create harmony out of the current chaos. I myself am also committed to do my best as the new leader of Japan.

Achieving economic growth in tandem with fiscal health is the most crucial challenge confronting the world at the present time. Japan will press ahead with its targets for restoration of fiscal sustainability. Meanwhile, as we recognize that

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revitalization of the Japanese economy is directly linked to the rebuilding of the world economy, we will work on the strengthening of industrial infrastructure, employment and energy conservation, toward achievement of a full-fledged recovery from the earthquake disaster. In the mid-to-long term, we intend to further reinforce partnership between Japanese and other global economies. It is also important that trade activities not be disturbed by the excessive currency volatility.

Moreover, to realize sustainable growth of the Japanese economy, we will promote the attainment of a low-carbon society and a transition to a green economy. The key to achieving these goals is technological innovation in the areas of renewable energies, energy saving and clean use of fossil fuels, movement referred to as “green innovation”. By around summer of next year, the Government of Japan will create a new strategy and plan on Japan’s mid- to long-term energy composition to pursue a bold energy shift.

Japan will further improve upon its excellent, safe, secure and environment-friendly technologies, as represented by energy-efficient houses, electric appliances and electric vehicles. Japan will make a useful contribution for the growth of the global economy and for a brighter future for all in the discussions toward Rio+20.

Mr. President,

Japan will seek a safe and brighter future with full force. The maximum vertical height onshore above sea level, called the “run-up height”, of the tsunami that hit the Tohoku district reached as high as 40 meters, the highest such value ever observed in Japan’s recorded history. We have learned that we must be very well prepared. In that regard, there are contributions that Japan, with such experience behind it, is uniquely qualified to make.

The first lesson from Japan’s recent tragedy is the importance of international cooperation in disaster risk reduction. We have a long history of combating and overcoming natural disasters. In fact, we have provided active support in the efforts to respond to the disasters which have occurred in recent years in areas such as Sumatra, Sichuan in China, Haiti and New Zealand. We are prepared to share with the world our

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accumulated knowledge and skills, as a country which has learned to coexist harmoniously with nature. As a first step, Japan will hold an international conference in the disaster-stricken Tohoku region next year to boost international cooperation on coping with natural disasters. To build on the outcome of the conference, Japan proposes to host the Third World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015. Japan will take a leading role in the international community in creating a disaster-resistant world society.

Next, Japan hopes to share its acquired knowledge and experience in the field of nuclear safety. I welcome the holding yesterday of the high-level meeting on this issue under the initiative of the Secretary-General. Following the nuclear accident, Japan has implemented emergency safety measures and has further strengthened its nuclear energy regulation regime. In yesterday's meeting, I expressed my resolve to contribute positively to the reinforcement of global nuclear power safety, drawing on our experiences in the accident. Next year, Japan will co-host an international conference with the IAEA to share the results of the overall assessment of the accident in comprehensive detail, and to contribute to the various measures taken by the international community to raise the standards for nuclear safety. Although some countries, regrettably, are still imposing undue restrictions on imports from Japan, our government will continue to provide prompt and accurate information on this matter, with transparency. I would request that all countries make sound judgments based upon scientific evidence.

Mr. President,

Global threats continue to proliferate. It is essential to solve the root causes of these threats while taking steps to address them. Japan will continue to respond to both challenges in order to ensure a brighter and more peaceful future.

With regard to the issue of piracy off the coast of Somalia, Japan will remain actively engaged in combating the problem through the continuous deployment to the area of two destroyers and two patrol aircraft.

Japan intends to make enhanced efforts toward the eradication of terrorism as

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well as its causes. Despite the passage of a decade since the 9.11 attacks, our collective sorrow is yet to be healed. And in that connection, I would like to express my sincere condolences on the demise of Mr. Rabbani, Chairman of the High Peace Council in Afghanistan. Japan reiterates its firm condemnation of these atrocious acts of terrorism. In order to prevent Afghanistan from once again becoming a breeding ground for terrorism, we will continue to confront the problem with strong resolve. Japan has expressed its commitment to provide approximately five billion U.S. dollars of assistance over five years from 2009, focusing on security, reintegration of former insurgents in society and development, and will steadily implement this commitment.

UN peacekeeping missions are being dispatched to fragile and conflict-prone States. Japan will contribute to the efforts for peacebuilding by actively participating in those operations. We must further improve circumstances to this end.

At the same time, we will do our best to achieve the ideal of “a World without Nuclear Weapons” through such efforts as the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI).

The DPRK’s nuclear and missile issues pose a threat to the entire international community, and Japan continues to urge the DPRK to take concrete actions toward their resolution. In particular, the abduction issue represents a violation of basic human rights. Thus, this is a universal issue and a matter of great concern for the entire international community. Japan is committed to continuing its utmost efforts to realize the return of all the victims at the earliest possible date, through strengthened coordination with other Member States. With regard to Japan-DPRK relations, Japan intends to maintain its efforts to comprehensively resolve the outstanding issues of concern, settle the unfortunate past and normalize relations, in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. Japan urges the DPRK to take positive steps in order that our countries may have a dialogue toward this goal.

Mr. President,

In recent years, the role of the United Nations has taken on greater significance than ever. In order for the United Nations to tackle these issues more effectively, Japan

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will continue to support increasing effectiveness and efficiency and reinforcing the functions of the United Nations.

Security Council Reform is absolutely necessary in this respect. We must accelerate the stagnated reform process. All Member States must proactively commit to the reform with a sense of urgency, that it would affect the credibility of the United Nations. Japan intends to launch a substantive negotiation toward the reform with like-minded members, to make tangible achievements during this session.

Mr. President,

As I promised moments ago, Japan will recover from the earthquake disaster, and seek a peaceful, safe and brighter future side by side with the leaders gathered here. For that purpose, Japan will maintain its contribution to the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals, focusing on health and education. Moreover, Japan will continue its contribution to the development of Africa by hosting the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in 2013. Regarding the support for the developing countries to address climate change, Japan will implement its commitments on the Fast-Start Finance up to next year. Japan will continue its support beyond 2012.

Mr. President,

Today I would like to announce Japan's new commitments.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate the people of the Republic of South Sudan on achieving their independence, and provide assurances that Japan will extend wherever possible support for the nation-building efforts in South Sudan as well as for the consolidation of peace in the region. Japan is eager to make contributions to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) in the fields in which Japan excels. From this point of view, we are preparing to dispatch Japanese Self-Defense Forces personnel to Mission Headquarters as staff officers. Japan is also interested in dispatching an engineering unit of our Self-Defense Forces, to which the UN expresses high expectations. Japan therefore will conduct the necessary field study as early as

possible.

Secondly, Japan will remain actively involved in the international community's efforts against humanitarian crises. One of the most pressing challenges at present is the drought in the Horn of Africa, which is directly affecting the children of the region. To mitigate this suffering as effectively as possible, Japan will provide further humanitarian aid in addition to the assistance worth approximately 100 million U.S. dollars which it has already implemented.

The last commitment I would like to announce concerns the Middle East and North Africa. Japan will support reform and democratization efforts in this region, which is now undergoing a massive change often referred to as the "Arab Spring". To improve the employment situation and support human resource development in the region, Japan is prepared to extend an additional yen loan worth approximately 1 billion U.S. dollars in total, for projects which are expected to contribute to infrastructure building and industrial development. Moreover, we will provide support to ensure fair elections in Tunisia and Egypt, where polls are scheduled to be held in autumn this year. For a new Libya, Japan will support the country's nation-building efforts in cooperation with the international community, utilizing its expertise and technological capacity. At the same time, Japan will deepen economic relations with Middle Eastern and North African countries by further promoting trade and investment through such means as trade insurance and export loans. As Middle East peace represents the linchpin for the peace and stability of the region, Japan will make active efforts, such as extending assistance to the Palestinians, for the realization of the two-state solution.

Mr. President,

To conclude my statement today, I will touch briefly upon what I have felt in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake. After the events of 11 March this year, I strongly felt the magnificence of a society in which each individual undertakes actions in an orderly manner, a society in which people help each other. In addition, all lines of the Tohoku *shinkansen* (bullet trains), including a train which was running at 270 kilometers per hour at the time of the earthquake, made emergency stops safely,

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without causing a single injury. I believe this demonstrated fact bears witness to Japan's high level of technical advancement.

I thus believe in the strength of the Japanese people, which comes to the fore most prominently in times of crisis. I am certain that such resilience, both human and technological, which does not yield in the face of enormous difficulties, will be the very source of Japan's future contribution to the international community.

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us take on the challenges for the resolution of the issues confronting the world today, with strong determination to open the way to a brighter future for humanity. As the new leader of Japan, I am determined to make progress step by step towards a more peaceful, prosperous and positive future, hand in hand with the leaders assembled here today.

The people of Japan as well as the government are determined to overcome any and all difficulties. We will continue our contribution towards a brighter future for the people of the world.

I should like to close my statement by reiterating our firm determination.

Thank you for your attention.