

Lev



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 223-4300 · www.un.int/japan/
check against delivery/embargo until delivery

ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. YOSHIHIKO NODA
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN AT THE SIXTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF
THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
~Responsibility for Tomorrow and Three Pearls of Wisdom~

Mr. President,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Al-Nasser for his dedication during his one-year tenure as President and congratulate His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremić on his assumption of duties as President of the Sixty-Seventh session of the United Nations General Assembly. I would also like to pay my deep respect to His Excellency Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his leadership.

One year ago, I started my speech on this podium by conveying our outpouring of appreciation to the world.

It has been one and a half years since the Great East Japan Earthquake in March last year. The people in the affected areas are making strenuous efforts to revive their hometowns with an unyielding spirit. In order to respond to generous support from all over the world, we, the Japanese, vowed before the souls of the victims to hand down the lessons learned from the disaster to succeeding generations beyond our national borders.

Japan will continue sharing these lessons with the world in order to build

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

societies resilient to natural disasters and to make concrete contributions to nuclear safety. The Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety, which is scheduled for the end of this year and co-sponsored by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the 3rd United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction, which Japan aims to host in three years, will all provide meaningful opportunities to share lessons.

Mr. President,

The warning from nature brought on by the unprecedented earthquake and massive tsunami posed a more fundamental question as to how we should sustain our civilization.

Since the moment of their birth, human beings have transformed their own “wisdom” into power to survive harsh natural environments. Despite advanced science and technology in modern civilization, however, forces of nature have reminded us how human beings are still weak and have a fragile existence.

Threats that may endanger human existence lie in advanced civilization itself, and not only in nature. There are a number of examples of threats such as environmental degradation, terrorism, and proliferation of nuclear weapons.

What is required for the human species to be able to keep its presence on earth and continue to enjoy peace and prosperity? The answer is clear. Humans must get wiser. This is it.

Humans have so far gained abundant knowledge. The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution unfolding in front of us is building up human “knowledge” further on a geometric scale and at an exponential speed. Human “wisdom” seems to have improved dramatically.

However, is that true? Walking in the forefront of a long human history, we are living in a period of complicated and violent change. Tensions among nations have risen in many parts of the world with more uncertain future prospects.

The real test for us to survive in this unprecedented period is not how much knowledge and information we have, but to learn the true value of numerous pearls of “wisdom” human beings have accumulated.

Mr. President,

One of the first such pearls of wisdom humans gained was power to give adequate thought to not only the “now,” but also the “future.” It is the power to imagine the benefits of future generations beyond our own benefits and act on their behalf.

Agricultural society, which prompted human beings to open a new vista, was made possible through the long-term perspective toward the future that human beings acquired when they waited for the harvest instead of thinking solely about immediate concerns.

Now is the time for us to exert our wisdom and build a sustainable future for the sake of succeeding generations.

Many countries have built up massive fiscal deficits so fiscal soundness is now a common challenge. If people living now do not overcome deficits by cutting spending and striving to increase revenues, future generations will be forced to repay the deficits. This structure is nothing but current generations exploiting future generations.

Democracy is historically-proven to be the best political system. However, we are faced with the enormous challenge of whether or not democracy can serve as a system to keep fairness between generations across the globe. Under the parliamentary democracy, comprised of representatives serving people living now, there are no guarantees when it comes to properly representing the interests of future generations. The structure invites politics that burden silent future generations and puts problems off.

We are all responsible for the next generations. The challenges facing us must be resolved by our generation. Political leaders must take charge of their responsibilities now for tomorrow. In order to protect sound democratic societies, now is the time to exert the “power to think about the benefits for future generations.”

Over the past 20-odd years, Japan repeatedly procrastinated in politics and was considered a symbol of a “country that delayed decisions,” but I pledged

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

to change the politics of Japan and staked my political life on the realization of “comprehensive reform of social security and taxation systems.”

This reform is an ambitious package of policies made to support Japan’s social security system by maintaining a stable financial basis in the face of a rapidly aging population and paving the way for fiscal rehabilitation. It is a comprehensive reform pursuing both economic growth and fiscal reconstruction. Japan is taking a firm step toward a “country that makes decisions” without postponing difficult issues.

Mr. President,

Another pearl of wisdom that humans acquired was from the perspective of looking down at the earth where we live.

I recently had an opportunity to communicate directly with Astronaut Akihiko Hoshide during his stay in the International Space Station orbiting the earth by a phone link with the ground station to my office. At the time of the linkup, a female elementary school student who was attending with us posed a riddle to the astronaut.

“What the earth has but space doesn’t have is air and gravity. So what does space have that the earth doesn’t?”

The astronaut replied, a “perspective of looking at the earth from outside of it.” This conversation expressed in simple terms what I want to say today.

Because we have obtained the perspective of “looking at the earth from outside,” humanity at large shares the sublime mission to protect the global environment. We must always return to this perspective, going beyond borders and advancing concrete measures to protect the earth’s environment –a basis of the survival of human beings.

In an effort to protect the global environment, a significant outcome was achieved for sustainable development at Rio+20 in June this year. Japan announced the “Green Future Initiatives,” proposing that we explore “sustainable growth” in prosperity without the supply-demand crunch of natural resources and energy, and a worsening global environment. Japan will realize a low carbon and sound material-cycle society and take the lead in solving common energy challenges facing the world. To this end, we need more innovation in energy efficiency and renewable energy. In light of the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company’s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station on March 11 last year, the Government of Japan, aiming at realizing a society not dependent on nuclear power in the 2030’s, while constantly reviewing and reexamining policies as carefully assessing future outlook including the international situation regarding energy, will mobilize all possible policy resources to demonstrate to the world a model which will underpin a good balance between the shift toward green energy and economic growth.

Being even more conscious of our “one precious earth,” we must direct our warm attention to the preciousness of each life breathing on this earth. The

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

Japan-led resolution on “human security” adopted at the General Assembly at the United Nations on the 10th of this month can be a solid guide in envisaging the development for the next generation from the perspective of each person including women and young people. In light of the common understanding of “human security” stipulated in the resolution, Japan is determined to contribute to worldwide efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and work toward the establishment of the next development framework.

The ideal of “human security” must be most emphasized on the African continent, which steadily blooms with hidden potentials of development but is still suffering from many challenges, such as poverty, natural disasters, and conflicts. On the occasion of the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development or TICAD V at Yokohama in June next year, Japan plans to discuss the measures the international community and Africa should take and put into action.

We must completely resolve challenges that place our precious lives in danger. Afghanistan is making its utmost efforts for reconstruction after the long-drawn scourge of war, South Sudan is advancing its nation-building efforts, and Myanmar has taken steady steps toward democracy and reconciliation. Japan will make every possible effort to support and promote peacekeeping, peacebuilding, and “human security” in each region.

Mr. President,

A third pearl of wisdom that humans obtained was the manner in which

human beings settle disputes reasonably under rules.

Human beings have acquired language and nurtured wisdom, but they have failed to resist temptation to solve conflicts by force even in modern times.

Despite two world wars and the two calamities of atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, disarmament, non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), and prevention of terrorism continue to be contemporary issues. As nuclear and missile issues in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and Iran currently pose serious threats to the entire world, it is indispensable for each country to coordinate at the United Nations and the IAEA, including the implementation of U.N. Security Council resolutions to urge both the DPRK and Iran to take concrete actions. Japan, the only country that has experienced the horror of nuclear devastation in war, will continue to carry out a mission of seeking a "world free of nuclear weapons."

The issue of abductions by the DPRK represents a violation of basic human rights. Thus, this is a universal issue and a matter of grave concern to the entire international community. Japan is committed to continuing its utmost efforts to realizing the return of all victims at the earliest possible date, through strengthened coordination with other Member States. Japan intends to maintain its efforts to comprehensively resolve outstanding issues of concern, settle the unfortunate past, and normalize relations in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration. Japan continues to urge the DPRK to take positive steps.

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

Humans have done more than just act on their lust for the use of force. We have also developed a skill to solving conflicts calmly by reason; it is called the “rule of law.”

Any state has a responsibility to protect peace, ensure the safety of its people, and protect its sovereignty, territorial land and sea. Japan will also fulfill such responsibility in accordance with international law. Meanwhile, as globalization proceeds, challenges confronting the international community are getting increasingly complex, and relations between nations can easily get tense. At this critical juncture, we are to establish the “rule of law” as a basis for global peace, stability, and prosperity. The “rule of law” is essential to preventing and resolving conflicts in a peaceful manner, and it plays a critical role in maintaining a stable and predictable society; thus it must be further enhanced. Any attempt to realize a country’s ideology or claim by unilateral use of force or threat is inconsistent with the fundamental spirit of the UN charter and is against the wisdom of human being, thus absolutely unacceptable. It is important to try to further develop international law and ensure it gets implemented more effectively. I strongly call for leaders to strengthen the “rule of law” so as to leave future generations with a more peaceful and stable international community.

We are actually witnessing conflicts between nations being settled based on international law. A typical example would be within the Dispute Settlement system in the World Trade Organization (WTO). The mechanism made it possible for states to solve trade disputes with the common language of “law,” not by “force,” in the Panel or the Appellate Body.

Japan has always valued the “rule of law” and contributed to strengthening it. After joining the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Japan consistently recognized the jurisdiction of the Court as compulsory and took the lead in practicing the “rule of law.”

Japan is leading the world in its personnel and financial contribution to international judicial institutions. Besides the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Japanese judges have served also at the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS), the International Criminal Court (ICC), and in the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, and Japan has provided the latter three with the largest financial support. Japan is asking each country to kindly offer financial support to the Extraordinary Chambers of Cambodia facing severe financial crisis at the moment.

Supporting the United Nations in promoting the “rule of law” continues to be a huge challenge. Once again, in cooperation with the United Nations, I call for nations to recognize the compulsory jurisdiction of the ICJ as Japan did and for non-member countries of the ICC and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) to join at an early date.

There are still a number of territorial and maritime disputes in many parts of the world. It is the philosophy of the Charter of the United Nations, as well as a shared principle in the international community, to settle disputes in a peaceful manner based on international law. Japan, under any circumstance, is determined to comply with the principle and seek peaceful solutions based on

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

international law. The world should pay more attention to the role the international judicial institutions can play in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

The Middle East and Africa are still in a tumultuous whirlpool though they are moving toward the establishment of democracy. Japan will continue to support democratization and reform efforts by each country. We cannot overlook continuous violence and suppression in Syria as well as serious violations of human rights from the perspective of the “rule of law.” Japan strongly condemns the massive attacks in Syria, involving tens of thousands of innocent citizens, journalists and aid workers, including Ms. Mika Yamamoto, a Japanese journalist. Japan intends to put more pressure on the Government of Syria along with the international community and extend humanitarian assistance to the people of Syria.

Let me emphasize that civilians must be protected and the safety of diplomats and workers of international organizations must be secured in the international community, which ought to be upheld through the “rule of law.” Today, violence against this principle must not be tolerated for any reason.

The concept of the “rule of law” is the foundation for a stable and reliable society, making movement of peoples and trade more vibrant and serving as a basis of prosperity. I believe that “the rule of law,” can be an important infrastructure that brings order and prosperity to a network of states centering on the Asia-Pacific region. Japan will make vigorous contributions to rule-making efforts to expand trade and investment, build maritime order

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

including safety of navigation, and create order for prosperity.

Rules needed in the international community are not simply for solving individual problems. Orderly relations between nations or within international organizations require the “rule of law” – namely “enhanced global governance.” Unless all nations fulfill responsibilities in their respective capacities, we cannot overcome various common challenges confronting the world. In particular, I hope that emerging economies will fulfill their responsibilities commensurate with each national power.

As part of such efforts, it is important that we engage in thorough discussions on how the United Nations should develop in the future. We strongly support the management reform of the United Nations. Also, the Security Council must be endowed with a legitimacy that reflects the realities of the world today in order for the Council to be fully effective. Japan is ready to take on greater responsibility in the international community. Now is the time to accelerate the stalled process on the Security Council reform and start genuine negotiations.

So far, I have mentioned three pearls of wisdom necessary for human beings to live sustainable lives in the future and I have also tried to convey Japan’s contribution in each of them.

I have a belief. Human beings will continue adapting to this complex society and get wiser. They will give adequate consideration to future generations and solve disputes calmly by reason under rules from the perspective of looking at the earth from the outside.

check against delivery/embargo until delivery

Let us take charge of our responsibilities for tomorrow together. The lofty task for us living now is to carry out the “politics where we imagine the benefits for future generations” and gather all our wisdom to set a course toward the survival of human beings.

I should like to conclude my remarks by pledging to all of you that Japan will stand at the forefront of carving out a future of human history toward peaceful and affluent societies.

Thank you for your kind attention.

(End)