



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

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Address by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan
At the Seventieth Session
Of the United Nations General Assembly
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New York
[Provisional Translation]

1.

Mr. President, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

The United Nations that this year commemorates the 70th anniversary of its founding is an assemblage of people who do not easily despair even in the face of desperate circumstances. Is that not precisely how the U.N. has withstood adversity and arrive at the present day?

Ebola virus was spreading wildly. Extremism has been rampant. And now before our eyes a great number of refugees are trying to flee from horrors, even at the risk of their very lives.

Let us together take on whatever challenges may arise, under the United Nations. And let each Member State bring to this struggle its own particular capabilities.

Japan has a history of supporting nation-building in a variety of places. We have experience working to foster human resources, offering our utmost in humanitarian assistance and upholding women's rights. Now more than ever, Japan wishes to offer that wealth of experience, unstintingly.

Japan will further enhance its assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Syria and Iraq. Converted to a monetary figure, this year's assistance comes to approximately

810 million US dollars in total, triple the amount we provided last year.

In Lebanon, we will implement 2 million US dollars in new assistance measures. We will leverage this to impart momentum for the collaboration between humanitarian actors and development actors.

We will newly implement approximately 2.5 million US dollars in humanitarian assistance for countries neighboring the EU that are grappling with the acceptance of refugees and migrants, such as the Republic of Serbia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Each of these assistance measures is an emergency countermeasure that Japan is able to undertake. But at the same time, our unchanging principle is at all times to endeavor to return to the root of the problem and improve the situation.

In order to bring stability to the Iraqi people's daily lives, their water supply and sewage systems must be dependable. Including these efforts, Japan is preparing assistance of approximately 750 million US dollars to help build peace and fully ensure this peace across the Middle East and Africa.

I wish to look squarely at the fact that behind the refugees we find a much larger number of people who are unable even to flee and become refugees.

In rebuilding devastated countries and transforming them into places that allow people to pursue happiness once again, it may appear roundabout route, but fostering the abilities of each human being and cultivating from a grass-roots level each person's capacity to fight against fear and want is in fact, the shortest path there.

That conviction became Japan's policy of valuing the provision of

education and health and aiming to build up the strength of women of all ages in particular. This is a policy that aims to fully ensure "human security."

I am extremely pleased that such efforts to value each individual were thoroughly included within the development goals newly set forth by the United Nations community.

2.

Japan wishes to create an environment in which mothers with newborns are able to wish only for the healthy growth of their children.

As I reflected on that, I came across a photograph showing the contents of a bag carried by a female refugee.

What do people pack in the one bag they take with them when fleeing hardships?

Aboessa, a 20-year-old woman who crossed the Mediterranean Sea on a rubber raft, could bring very little

when she fled a Palestinian refugee camp in the south of Damascus.

Everything appearing in the photograph was for her 10-month-old daughter: a clean change of socks; a hat; a single jar of baby food. But as I looked at the photo, I found my eyes riveted on something that looked like a notebook.

Staring carefully at that notebook, which had been wrapped carefully in plastic to protect it from getting wet, I saw that it was a Maternal and Child Health Handbook that Japan has been distributing in refugee camps in Syria.

In Japan, women who discover they are pregnant receive this handbook, known as a "Maternal and Child Health Handbook." It is a notebook in which they can keep records about the health of themselves and their new born child. This Handbook system has been in place for more than 70 years.

Of all the mothers who, glancing through the heights and weights written down in this handbook, smile sweetly at their child's growth, who on earth would wish for that same child to become an apostle of fear once grown up?

This Handbook is a record of the prayers of the mother, wishing for her child to grow up healthy. It takes on power, the power of making the mother wish that the child's life not be squandered.

We have distributed Maternal and Child Health Handbooks in refugee camps in Palestine, Syria, and Jordan, wishing that a mother's love could transform the soil that sometimes creates despair and fear.

And we know for certain that some women continue to treasure these Handbooks, thoroughly infused with such wishes, even during their exodus.

I am struck by the fact that the concept of human security, which

seeks to empower each individual, has produced eloquent results, albeit bitter.

3.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Rule of Law and the principles of equality before the law are values Japan respects more highly than anything else. The extension of these principles also begins with fostering human capacity.

I will share with you an episode in which a young Japanese woman is making tremendous efforts as Japan assists in training police personnel who will be the guardians of the law.

In order to break with the very root of violence and fear, it is critical to cultivate good police personnel and a good police organization. With that belief, we have been directing our energy at cultivating police

personnel in Afghanistan and many other locations.

That is exactly what Japan has been doing continuously in the Democratic Republic of the Congo since 2004. The Japan International Cooperation Agency, or JICA, has assisted in the police training of the national police force there right up until today.

Until today, more than 20,000 police personnel have taken this training. This number includes some female police personnel. Former armed insurgent soldiers are also in this group, in no small part. The motto has been to make "a police force friendly towards the local people."

JICA has been responsible for developing the training plan and executing it, and it has consistently been women who have been in charge in the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the Japanese side.

One of those women, for example, was seen as a "little giant" in the eyes of her colleagues.

Intermingled with the male police personnel, she is indeed small in stature. And yet her title of a "giant" came about because she never flinches from difficulties and takes the initiative to grapple with issues, making full use of the French language skills she has acquired. The national police personnel have respect for her and place their trust in her.

Since two years ago here at the General Assembly I have emphasized to you that Japan's new flag is the "Proactive Contributor to Peace based on the principle of international cooperation." The woman I just introduced to you is among those Japanese individuals devoting themselves to this on the front lines.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am second to none in looking to women as the ones to take on many of the roles

that will carve out Japan's future. In the external assistance that Japan implements as well, we place emphasis on policies and measures that impart safety, health, and peace of mind to women and uphold their human rights.

In countries in the process of recovering from civil wars, Japanese women are making splendid contributions towards the task of cultivating those who will uphold the Rule of Law. I doubly take pride in this.

Taking advantage of various opportunities until now, I have urged the international community to make the 21st century an era in which women's human rights are not infringed upon.

Today I am pleased to be able to report that Japan too has decided upon its Action Plan Regarding the Participation and Protection of Women, based on U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325.

Protecting women and girls from violence and providing them with basic health services constitute exceptionally important items within Japan's Action Plan.

Moreover, this year, for the second consecutive year, we held the World Assembly for Women: WAW! 2015, where meaningful discussions were held for the purpose of creating a society in which women shine.

4.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations is in fact a venue for "optimistic realists" to come together, is it not?

This body does not impotently despond of the future. It also does not avert its eyes from the actual situation. It is in this way that the United Nations has carved out its 70 years of history.

There are several points in which I too cannot help but squarely examine the actual situation.

The first of these is regarding North Korea. Japan will work in coordination with relevant countries towards the comprehensive resolution of outstanding issues, including abduction, nuclear and missile issues.

This year, the 70th year since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was also a year in which we renewed our grief.

However, regrettably, in some areas there appears to be an ongoing increase in nuclear arsenals without transparency. Moreover, this year's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to indicate guidelines for future nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Nuclear weapon reductions should proceed continually between the U.S. and Russia. But Japan will continue to assert vehemently that other states possessing nuclear weapons should also move forward in reducing their arsenals.

Determined to bring about the total elimination of nuclear weapons, Japan is preparing a new draft resolution to promote united action by the international community. I have no doubt that this resolution will receive the support of a large number of countries.

5.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In a year in which we congratulate the U.N. on its 70th anniversary of its founding, a major drive regarding the reform of the Security Council has begun.

During the previous U.N. General Assembly session, earnest efforts by dedicated individuals and various countries greatly deepened discussions on the reform of the Security Council. Furthermore, two weeks ago, here in this very chamber, that enthusiasm was handed over to the current session as the entire assembly applauded.

Endowed with this enthusiasm and, moreover, my conviction regarding the role that Japan should play, I will continue to pursue the path by which we realize the reform of the Security Council through the cooperation of you, Mr. President, and the Member States, and Japan seeks to become a permanent member of the Security Council and makes a contribution commensurate with that stature.

First of all, Japan has strictly maintained itself as a peace-loving nation for the 70 years since the end of World War II, and we have accumulated a record of successful

efforts fostering peace and prosperity in the world.

In Cambodia and Timor-Leste, Japan put forth its best efforts in its diplomatic endeavors, its dispatch of personnel to peacekeeping operations (PKO), and later, its assistance over the long term.

There are three layers found within PKO implementation. First is the decision-making layer, for determining what is to be done and where. This is followed by the necessary preparations of personnel and financing and finally comes the process of beginning actual operations on the ground.

Japan is able to be the "Gap Bridger" traversing the information gaps that tend to arise between these layers. Moreover, Japan is able to make a positive contribution by playing a leading role in which it shoulders responsibility for what it says and does in any of these layers.

At this very moment in South Sudan, members of an engineering unit of the Japan Self-Defense Forces are making efforts around the clock. In Kenya, experts from our Ground Self-Defense Force are training members of the armed forces of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Rwanda in how to best operate heavy engineering equipment. Some peacekeeping operations have become inescapably bogged down in environments where there are no roads and bridges have been destroyed.

Japan has also for its part very recently prepared the legal domestic framework enabling it to contribute to Peacekeeping Operations in a broader manner going forward.

Second, it is Japan that values "ownership" and "partnership."

Japan has asserted for many years that in order to battle despair and cultivate well-being, the dual aspects of the intentions of the

parties concerned and international cooperation are both important.

It is all people acquiring the ownership by which they themselves determine the path of their own lives that is our ultimate objective. It was from emphasizing this approach that the concept of valuing "human security" also came into being.

The third is that Japan always makes efforts to be a country that listens actively to the voices of the parties concerned.

Three days ago, I held a meeting with leaders of the countries chairing the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), for a third consecutive year.

In Japan we have a gathering for advancing African development known as TICAD -- the Tokyo International Conference on African Development -- which has been in place for 20 years. Next year, I will convene TICAD in Africa for the first

time, and I intend to listen to an even richer spectrum of African voices.

Last night I also had another meeting with the leaders of the Pacific Island Countries. We have been discussing such matters as observing "November 5th, World Tsunami Day" in common and holding trainings and improving our capacity regarding tsunamis.

The first time Japan became a non-permanent member of the Security Council was in 1958, two years after Japan acceded to the United Nations. If Japan is again selected this autumn through your gracious support, it will be our 11th time serving on the Council.

Japan is the country that has most frequently subjected itself to review by its peers.

The three points I noted above represent the strengths of Japan that all here can concur with, given the footprints we have imprinted upon

our path thus far. Japan intends to make use of these strengths to reinforce the United Nations.

The Japanese are a people who view, and will continue to view, the two letters "UN" as having a certain glimmer. Holding aloft the flag of "Proactive Contributor to Peace based on the principle of international cooperation," Japan is determined to undertake Security Council reform in order to transform the United Nations into a body appropriate for the 21st century, and then, as a permanent member of the Security Council, carry out its responsibilities in making still greater contributions towards world peace and prosperity.

I will end my address today looking forward to your kind understanding.

I thank you very much.

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