

**Check Against Delivery**

**JAPAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS  
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**Japan and the UN, from a UN perspective**

Thank you for that kind introduction.

And indeed, please allow me to thank my gracious hosts, the Government of Japan, for making this wonderful visit to your country possible, and to the Institute of International Affairs for arranging this afternoon's event.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the United Nations celebrates its own "kanreki" in this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, I am very grateful for the opportunity to talk to you about your country, our United Nations, and the serious challenges we must face together.

As you all well know, the United Nations was founded 60 years ago, by the victors of a devastating global conflict. It was created in 1945 by a group of far-sighted leaders who were determined to make the second half of the twentieth century different from the first.

They drew up rules to govern international behaviour, and they founded institutions in which different nations could cooperate for the common good. That was the idea of "global governance" – to foster international cooperation, for the elaboration of consensual global norms

and for the establishment of predictable, universally applicable rules, to the benefit of all.

The keystone of the arch was the United Nations itself. The UN was seen by world leaders as the only possible alternative to the disastrous experiences of the first half of the twentieth century. It stood for a world in which people of different nations and cultures looked on each other, not as subjects of fear and suspicion but as potential partners, able to exchange goods and ideas to their mutual benefit.

Yet we also know that two months after the founding of the UN in San Francisco, atomic bombs fell on two Japanese cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I will be making my first visit to Hiroshima this weekend, and I have no doubt it will serve as a moving reminder of horror and also of how much Japan has changed since then.

It was in 1952 that Japan applied for membership of this new Organization. Support for Japan's application among many of the then 51 Member States was strong, but Japan's application was caught in a debate that was part ideological – a tit for tat between the West and the Soviet Union over the applications of various States – and part philosophical.

The Cold War is now history and we need not give too much thought, as we face up to the challenges of the twenty-first century, to that great divide. But the consequences of the second part of this debate -- in which Japan was for a while an unfortunate bystander -- live on. This was the debate between those who argued for a restricted organization of “like-minded” States, and those who argued for universal membership of the

world's organization. This debate still continues in the minds of some commentators in the US.

Japan was not just patient during the first years of this debate in the 1950s. Although it did not yet possess the full membership it sought and deserved, as soon as your country emerged from the devastation of the Second World War, it commenced acting multilaterally, by signing treaties, by joining UN system organizations, and by contributing what it could to international peace and development. Even before it was a UN Member State, it was a good international citizen.

After considerable discussion, and while the two Cold War camps negotiated a solution to their dispute, the UN's broader membership decided that peace and development would be best-served by a universal organization – one which would derive its power and its legitimacy from the fact that every country had a voice at the table. And one of the first acts upon resolving its problems about membership, in 1956, was an overwhelming vote to accept Japan's application.

Ever since, as your country grew stronger, as its economy blossomed and as it once again came to take its proper place in the community of nations, Japan has been a guiding light at our Organization.

Not only have you, as Secretary-General Annan told the Diet last year, built a vibrant, prosperous democracy that is an inspiration to people throughout the world, but you have also built a reputation as a paragon of international engagement. I am conscious that Japan's contribution to the UN regular budget exceeds that of four of the Permanent Members of the

Security Council combined. So it is hardly by surprising that many of us in the Secretariat share your detestation of the so-called “enemy clauses” – their removal from the UN Charter is long overdue. This is all the more so, because there are many countries, and not only those that are smaller or less powerful than yours, that look to Japan as an example of how to behave in the international arena. In part, this is certainly due to Japan’s mighty economy – which has seen its share of difficulties but which remains the envy of the world.

But I think there is more to this than simply a powerful economy. Japan is seen as an example of how it is possible to build a modern society with a modern economy, and at the same time remain focused and engaged on critical issues like disarmament, protecting our environment, and helping those less well developed find their own way to a better life.

The Tokyo International Conferences on African Development are prime examples of a Japanese initiative that has improved the lives of people in genuine need, far way from these shores. TICAD is something about which Japan has every reason to be very proud, and for which millions of people are very grateful. Please have no doubt that Japan’s support for Africa - reaffirmed recently in the Government’s Africa Village Initiative - has not only saved lives of innocent children, but has also made the world a safer place.

I know that despite Japan’s generosity, it is sometimes challenged to raise its Official Development Assistance to the level of 0.7 per cent of GDP, which remains a goal that UN Member States committed to reach. I am not here to press Japan to achieve a particular number, because Prof. Jeffrey

Sachs has done so just to last month, and because I know your collective hearts are in the right place. Japan has, in the last ten years, contributed almost one-fifth of all the official development assistance granted in that time around the world. But we hope you will not rest on these laurels. Even your admirers are troubled by the decline we have witnessed in Japan's ODA levels in each of the last five years. We believe this must be reversed. So let me express my confidence that Japan will, despite the competing demands on your resources, make significant progress towards increasing the percentage of its GDP that it devotes to development assistance. And that you will apply these resources not only with compassion but with imagination and flexibility.

As recently as last week, your Government extended emergency assistance of some 39 million dollars to support the consolidation of peace in seven African troubled countries. Let me assure you that African countries know exactly how important Japan is to the world-at-large.

And in its policies Japan has consistently revealed an appreciation of the inter-connectedness of underdevelopment and security. Poverty is often both the result and the cause of instability and conflict, and Japan has recognized this by extending development assistance to countries and peoples at grave risk of spiralling into a vicious cycle of war and suffering. No country has done more to advance the concept of human security at the United Nations than Japan.

I am very conscious that one of the issues that is close to the heart of Japan at present is its desire to play a larger role, commensurate with its place in the world, on the UN's Security Council. You are already

supportive of UN peacekeeping operations and post conflict peace-building missions, in which we hope Japanese Self-Defence personnel and assets will become more extensively involved. And as we all know, your country's attempts to make Security Council reform a reality have made great strides since Japan joined with my home country, India, and Brazil and Germany to form the so-called G4 alliance. And very recently, Japan's Foreign Minister, Mr. Nobutaka Machimura, endorsed the desire of African countries to also have a larger voice in the Security Council.

Many of us in the UN Secretariat share your disappointment that talks on reforming the Security Council have not so far translated into substantial action. Indeed, the international community's failure thus far to find a formula for the restructuring of the Council – something which almost the entire membership believes is essential – is a pity at a time where we seek to renew the UN, a project to which Secretary-General Annan is firmly committed. But this year -- the UN's 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary -- there is a real momentum behind the cause of reform and renewal. So I believe I can safely tell you two things.

Firstly, I believe that even before this issue is successfully resolved, Japan's place in the world has been enhanced by its conduct during the discussions. Japan's commitment to multilateralism, its willingness to listen and to consider the needs and desires of others, its dedication to peace and development, and its ongoing engagement in global efforts to address the problems of our times, has cemented Japan's role as a global leader. None of these things has gone unnoticed in international circles.

Secondly, I believe the international architecture is changing. The unprecedented developments of the past few years – the horrific terrorist

attacks on the world's sole superpower, the increasing globalization of the world economy, rapid advances in access to information, and even the difficulties in the Security Council over Iraq – have taught us that it must change. As the report of the Secretary-General's High-level Panel report made clear, if the UN is to meet new threats and new challenges, then change is essential.

Now I am an Indian, and it is the sensibilities I grew up with in India that inform my thinking and guide me as I try to make sense of the world. But let me step outside Asia, and offer some wisdom from the West, from a Westerner who was deeply influenced by Indian philosophy. In the words of the American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The years teach much which the days never know." We Asians have long been aware that change sometimes takes its time. Whether the time has come is something we may not know until the change is upon us. But we who believe in change have the obligation to work for it.

Very soon, next Monday in fact, the Secretary-General will produce his own report, which will outline proposals that will help us to continue to work together for a better world. Let me tell you right now that I am in no position to predict what this report will have to say on the question of membership of the Security Council. But let me recall that Secretary-General Annan has in the past made clear his views that the Security Council is an institution that should reflect the geopolitical realities of 2005, not those of 1945.

But let us also not focus on one issue alone as the litmus test by which change should be judged. As Japan's technological genius has taught the

world, things do not need to be huge to be important. The report will contain ideas that can make our world a better place for everyone, and that can make our Organization – your Organization – more efficient and better able to serve you in the twenty-first century.

When that report is released I would like to ask you to continue to do what the Japanese nation has done since the UN was created – to give serious consideration to the ideas it contains about many issues, to ask yourselves where you can make a difference, and to be open to how you, and the world, will benefit if they are put into practice. In short, I want to ask you to continue to play your rightful leadership role, and work with us to improve the United Nations and our world. In this time of change, we need your guidance and your help.

The two decisions taken in 1956 were the right ones. Who could doubt that Japan's membership of the United Nations has been an enormous benefit, both to the world and to Japan?

But I also believe the philosophical decision – to make our Organization universal – was the right one.

Global challenges, like terrorism, demand global solutions. Our security here is as much a function of decisions taken in Tenerife and Texas, as it is of decisions taken in Tokyo. Problems without passports – problems that cross all frontiers uninvited, problems of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, of the degradation of our common environment, of contagious disease and chronic starvation, of human rights and human wrongs, of mass illiteracy and massive displacement – cannot be solved by one country or even one group of countries, no matter how powerful.



**This globalized world more than ever needs a universal Organization -  
- a place where all countries can meet to discuss problems and find  
solutions that work for everyone.**

**And although decisions are sometimes slow in coming at the United Nations, when they do come, they carry an authority and a legitimacy that no bilateral treaties or smaller coalitions can offer. They are universal decisions. Decisions for all humankind.**

**I have come here today to thank Japan for its leadership – for its contributions to peacekeeping missions, to development, and to landmark agreements like the Kyoto Protocol. And I have come here today to ask you to view the UN not as a source of frustration, but as a work in progress. Please continue to give us your guidance and your leadership.**

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