

The Seventieth Session of the United Nations General Assembly

Excerpts from the Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Delivered in New York, September 29, 2015

Full text: http://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201509/1213007_9928.html

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. 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.

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 rebuilding devastated countries and transforming them into places that allow people to pursue happiness once again, it may appear to be a 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 came across a photograph showing the contents of a bag carried by a female refugee. 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. It is a notebook in which they can keep records about the health of themselves and their newborn child.

This handbook is a record of the prayers of the mother, wishing for her child to grow up healthy. 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 has produced eloquent results, albeit bitter.

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. 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 training of the national police force there right up until today. 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 these women, for example, was seen as a "little giant." The national police personnel 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. 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 twenty-first century an era in which women's human rights are not infringed upon.

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. 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'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.

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. 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 becomes 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.

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.

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. Last night I also had another meeting with the leaders of the Pacific Island Countries.

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.

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 twenty-first 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.