

# SPEECH OF THE PRIME MINISTER

AT HIS INAUGURATION PRESS CONFERENCE  
(AN EXCERPT)

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FULL TEXT: [https://japan.kantei.go.jp/99\\_suga/statement/202009/\\_00001.html](https://japan.kantei.go.jp/99_suga/statement/202009/_00001.html)

I am SUGA Yoshihide and I have been designated as the 99th prime minister.

Up to today, as Chief Cabinet Secretary in the second Abe Administration, I have worked on critical issues affecting the future of this country, namely reviving the Japanese economy, reconstructing Japan's diplomacy and national security, and realizing a social security system oriented to all generations. In addition, since the beginning of the year, I have been tackling head-on the spread of novel virus infections and the greatest economic downturn in the postwar period, an unprecedented situation Japan has never faced before.

In order to overcome the crisis and enable all citizens to restore their daily lives with peace of mind, we must thoroughly carry on with the initiatives the Abe Administration has promoted and advance them further. I recognize that as the mission given to me.

Right now, the highest-priority issue we must take on is responding to the novel coronavirus. We will absolutely prevent an explosive outbreak and thoroughly protect the lives and the health of the public. On top of that, we will aim to balance these measures with socioeconomic activities. We will streamline our countermeasures, strengthen our screening structures, and secure medical treatment structures.

At the same time, it is extremely important that, amidst economic conditions that remain severe, we protect employment and ensure that businesses are able to continue their operations. To those in need, we will extend our economic measures.

Economic revival will continue to be the matter of the highest priority of the administration. We will carry on with Abenomics, with its three pillars of monetary easing, fiscal investment, and the Growth Strategy, and we will continue to advance further reforms.

We will first overcome this crisis, and afterwards, we will undertake intensive reforms and make necessary investments towards a "post-corona" society. By doing so, we would like to restore a robust economy once more.

Above all, the novel coronavirus has revealed the necessity of digital transformation and the review of supply chains. Going forward, we will move up what we can do in this area and establish an agency in charge of digital transformation as a structure to coordinate related policies that are divided across multiple ministries and agencies and press forward with them vigorously.

Also, even in the "post-corona" age, we will continue to work hard to realize environmental measures and a decarbonized society as well as a stable energy supply.

I was born the eldest son in a farming family in Akita. The desire to cherish local communities and restore the vitality to all of Japan's communities flows consistently and ceaselessly in me.

When I assumed the position of Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications during the first Abe Administration, I established the "hometown tax" system. People coming to Tokyo from outside want to contribute in some fashion to their

hometowns and want to maintain their ties with them in some way. There is no doubt that they feel that way. So that is how, from what I myself thought, I proposed the "hometown tax" system and made it into a reality.

As Chief Cabinet Secretary, I worked to bring vitality back to communities, in particular those outside the major cities. What brought me the most joy is that last year, for the first time in 27 years, land prices in areas outside the major cities switched to increasing in value. That was an impact of visiting foreign tourists, so-called inbound tourism, which is a trump card in our efforts for regional revitalization. When the Abe Administration was inaugurated, the number of foreign tourists was 8.36 million. Last year, that number was 32 million. Agriculture too has seen exports of agricultural, forest, and fishery products expand from 450 billion yen to 900 billion yen last year. I want to continue to work hard on policies that bring vitality to local areas.

It is children who will hold the future of Japan in their hands. Addressing the declining birthrate has been a longstanding challenge for Japan. We have pressed forward with making kindergartens, day-care centers, universities, and vocational schools free of charge as well as with male national civil servants taking a minimum of one month of childcare leave. I would also like to build a social security system oriented to all generations through which young people are able to have peace of mind about the future as well.

In order to provide wide-reaching support for households hoping to have children and lower the hurdles as much as possible, we will have insurance cover fertility treatments. A society in which people can bear and raise children with peace of mind and a society in which women can stay healthy and be actively engaged -- I intend to thoroughly develop such an environment.

In the field of diplomacy and national security, the environment surrounding Japan is becoming increasingly severe. Against that background, I intend to

deploy policies that place a well-functioning Japan-US alliance as their linchpin. In order to defend our national interests to the end, I intend to strategically implement the free and open Indo-Pacific while also building stable relations with neighboring countries, including China and Russia.

I will aim for a total reassessment of our postwar diplomacy, doing my very best to resolve the abductions issue in particular. I will closely collaborate with the United States and other relevant countries and continue to make all-out efforts to realize the return of all of the abductees as early as possible.

I have always thought that our society still has a tremendous amount of unusual things that stand significantly apart from the common sense held by the public. I will never overlook them and, listening to voices on the ground and carefully looking at what is in line with common sense, act boldly. That is my belief. I will continue to do this, never wavering.

Self-help, mutual help, and public help and "kizuna" (bonds) are the vision of society I aspire for. To begin with, we must try to do things ourselves. Then we should assist each other within our families and communities. Then beyond that, the government will provide protection with a safety net. I aim to create this kind of government that the public trusts. ●

