

(Provisional Translation)

Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, at the Summit on
“Strengthening International Peace Operations”
10:30-12:00 a.m., Friday, September 26, 2014
Conference Room 2 of the United Nations, New York City

Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKOs) are the most important activity which the UN has been engaging in for international peace and security among others. It is a great pleasure for me to participate in today’s Summit as a co-host, and I sincerely appreciate the initiative of H.E. Joe Biden, Vice President of the United States.

Next year marks 15 years since the publication of the Brahimi Report, which advised the basic policies and principles of PKOs. Today, PKOs are again at a crossroads and the initiation of the strategic review by H.E. Ban Ki-moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations is very timely. Japan declared itself to be a “Proactive Contributor to Peace” at the General Assembly of the UN last year and will cooperate proactively with the countries concerned and the UN to maintain international peace and security.

Every year, PKOs are expanding and their mandates are becoming more diversified. Peacekeepers wearing blue helmets are required to fulfill important mandates such as the protection of civilians in ever-changing environments in the field.

Peacekeepers are beset with challenges such as capacity building in implementing their mandates swiftly, effectively and efficiently while ensuring their own basic safety.

To overcome these challenges, cooperation between major Financial Contributing Countries and Troop Contributing Countries is extremely significant.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, I will speak about Japan's three concrete commitments for PKOs based on its policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace".

Firstly, Japan will participate further proactively in UN Peacekeeping Operations. In line with the basic policies laid down in the Cabinet Decision last July, the government will commence the task of drafting the necessary legislation on national security.

Japan has earned solid credibility for its engineering and transport units, which are indispensable for enabling the smooth operations of PKOs. To support the rapid deployment of PKOs and bring about high quality operations, we will consider further contributions by the Japan Self-Defense Forces.

In addition, Japan will send Self-Defense Force officers to important and responsible posts in PKO mission headquarters and the UN Secretariat.

Secondly, efforts to improve the quality of peacekeepers' activities are indispensable for the success of PKOs. Japan will support UN activities aimed at capacity building.

For instance, Bangladesh is currently the largest Troop Contributing Country for PKOs. I had a meeting with its Prime Minister, H. E. Sheikh Hasina this month, and confirmed our cooperation in the implementation of PKO training by the UN in Bangladesh.

Japan has also been taking a leading role in the UN military unit manual project as the chair of the Engineer Unit working group.

In the field of peacebuilding, we are facing the great need for skilled civilian experts. Japan intends to cultivate further, in terms of both quantity and quality, our human resources who will contribute to the international community. In doing so, we will promote awareness on the protection and participation of women.

Thirdly, the rapid deployment of PKOs is a particularly urgent challenge, especially in Africa. In this regard, the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response

Partnership (APRRP), which the United States announced last month, is highly significant, and Japan will support this partnership. As its new commitment, Japan is prepared to provide engineering equipment in Africa through the Trust Fund in the United Nations as well as training in operating these machines effectively.

In addition, Japan is firmly continuing its financial and personnel contribution to PKO centers in Africa.

PKOs are “Bridges” to reach the bank of “Peace” over the river. The international community is able to provide a link to peace but it is only the people in the conflict-affected countries who can truly cross the bridge one by one. Japan will, based on the philosophy of Human Security, maintain its clear commitment to PKOs.

In closing, I would like to offer my warmest regards to all the peacekeepers and their supporters who are dedicating themselves to international peace and security.