

Tokyo Peacebuilders Symposium 2008
“Peacebuilding Experience and Knowledge from Asia to the World”

Closing Remarks by
Dr. Hideaki Shinoda, Director, Hiroshima Peacebuilders Center (HPC)
UN House, March 25, 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Guests,

I am honored to have this opportunity to speak in front of you at the very end of the two-day-long Tokyo Peacebuilders Symposium organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the United Nations University.

Let me thank you so much for your kindest attention to our HPC Program Associates, namely, the participants in the “Pilot Program for Human Resource Development in Asia for Peacebuilding” in the fiscal year 2007. Our young professionals, 15 from Japan and 14 from other Asian countries, have completed their highly intensive human resource development program in such a splendid way. We, those who are involved in the Hiroshima Peacebuilders Center, implementer of the 2007 Pilot Program, have been repeatedly impressed by their enormous amount of energy, enthusiasm and entrepreneurship. We have again and again praised throughout the program their intellectual capacity, professional commitment to peacebuilding, and courageousness that led them to participate in this pilot program in the first place.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It always requires braveness to put yourself in any kind of first pilot attempt. This applies to us ourselves indeed. But it applies more to our Program Associates who devoted such precious period of time in their career development. Our promising young professionals decided to do so, due to their love for profession in the field of peacebuilding. I have been calling them “pioneers” from the very beginning of this program. I several times reminded themselves of the point on the day of the commencement ceremony, on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the coursework, that of the on-the-job-training, and so on.

Our distinguished guests,

We sincerely appreciate your kindest assistance in our program. We, HPC, will never forget the great help we have received from so many people throughout the period of the 2007 Pilot Program. Without such benevolent external help, we certainly couldn't have completed this complicated program in such a time frame. However, it is also true that we certainly couldn't have found any point in working so hard for this program

without the devotion of such excellent young professionals for the cause of peacebuilding. As supporters of peacebuilders we are committed to the future of our young colleagues, given that they have shown such serious commitment to the cause in which we believe. We are absolutely confident that we shall continue to be able to feel happy to support our Program Associates, invaluable contributors to future global peacebuilding from Asia.

Our distinguished guests,

In the last two days we discussed many issues that reside in contemporary peacebuilding activities. There are so many complicated operational and policy issues that we need to reexamine again and again in order to better implement peacebuilding activities. But there is one clear fact we could recognize as the most important agenda in our discussions on peacebuilding.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We always need humans who are willing to make efforts for peacebuilding and who are capable of achieving and sustaining durable peace on the ground. It is my belief as a researcher of peacebuilding that we can never establish long-term peace without people who are committed to peace.

The program for Human Resource Development in Asia for Peacebuilding is not simply a training program. Well, it contains elements of training. But those elements only exist in a wider perspective of human resource development. Here we have a very Asian way in which we just do not simply train people, but we develop our precious human resources all together hand in hand from many angles for a long period of time. We appreciate and welcome your commitment to our Program Associates, not because we believe training will automatically lead to peace, but because we strongly believe human resource development is the indispensable key to successful peacebuilding. As we believe in the importance of the people committed to peacebuilding, we ask you to continue to support our future great contributors to peacebuilding throughout the world from Asia.

In the framework of this pilot program the implementer does not continue to exist. However, our determined promising young professionals continue to work for peacebuilding for years to come. So I would like to conclude my remarks by humbly asking for your continuous support in the future for our Program Associates, young professional peacebuilders in Asia, precious human resources and the foundation for peacebuilding throughout the world.

Thank you very much.