

**Statement by Parliamentary Vice-Minister Dr. Toshiko ABE,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan,
At the High Level Session, 7th Meeting of Governing Council for
Community of Democracies
Geneva, 26 February 2013**

Distinguished Guests and Colleagues,

Let me first express my deepest gratitude and respect to all those, who have worked tirelessly for the preparation of this meeting and above all the Government of Mongolia as a Chair and Permanent Secretariat of Community of Democracies.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The current administration under Prime Minister Abe attaches great importance on promoting universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law as our basic foreign policy. I, as a member of the Abe Administration, am very delighted here to discuss such an important issue as promoting fundamental values with distinguished representatives from member states taking part in this high level session of the Governing Council Meeting of the Community of Democracies (CD).

CD has been playing an important role as a platform for the democratization of the world since its founding in 2000. Japan welcomes that CD has developed as a more action-oriented entity with series of initiatives having already been taken such as the establishment of

Working Groups and Task Forces. In order to contribute to the further promotion of democratization, Japan is willing to share its experience and knowledge at various occasions such as Governing Council Meetings, Working Groups and Task Forces. As part of our contribution, we recently dispatched one Japanese diplomat to the permanent secretariat starting from February until the next Ministerial Meeting to be held in late April.

There have been tectonic movements in different parts of the world such as the Arab Spring and the democratization in Myanmar. Democracy, at its germinal stage, is very vulnerable, and requires a lot of assistance. Announcing “Partnership for Democratic Development (PDD)” in 1996, Japan has provided assistance for nation building in Cambodia for example in such areas as improvement of legal systems, electoral assistance, training of judicial officers among others. More recently, we have announced a new policy guideline for development assistance to Myanmar last April, one of whose three pillars enumerates human resources development and development of institutions including assistance for democratization.

The role of education is also extremely important in order to provide proper knowledge of democracy and raise its awareness to children. From this standpoint, in the “Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of democracies for the Education for Democracy” which was held in India in last January, Japan presented good practices of our ODA projects as how democracy-oriented school management in the community level could disseminate the democratic values in that country over the long run.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the light of our own experience, we are convinced that universal

values such as democracy or human rights are indispensable values for sustaining a stable national development including the economic aspect. Believing its importance, Japan, together with other CD member countries will further play a substantial role for promoting democracy in the world through bilateral and multilateral channel.

I thank you for your kind attention.