

Statement by Takashi UTO,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs,
on the occasion of the Eighth Ministerial Conference
of the Community of Democracies

H.E. Mr. Hugo Martinez, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of El Salvador

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express deep appreciation to the Government of El Salvador for hosting the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, and to the Secretariat of the Community of Democracies for supporting the preparation of the Conference. It is my honor to have the opportunity to deliver a statement on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Excellencies,

For the past 70 years since the end of World War II, Japan has consistently supported universal and core values such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law. Since its first days, the Abe administration has conducted active diplomacy in cooperation with countries sharing these values. It is said in the world of international politics that “a free and democratic international order” is challenged by “power politics” based on geopolitical interests and authoritarian movements. However, “a free and democratic international order” has the strength and record of being supported by many states and people due to its openness, inclusiveness and fairness. The fact that many ministers and representatives from around the world are attending this conference today

illustrates this point. Universal values are called “universal” because even though they are challenged from time to time, if you look at the medium and long term, these values are widely shared around the world. Japan would like to continue to participate in the activities of working groups and task forces of the Community of Democracies. We also want to actively support, in cooperation with like-minded countries, states and people attempting to respect and consolidate these core values.

As an example of such efforts, the Government of Japan hosted the “High-Level Seminar on Peacebuilding, National Reconciliation and Democratization in Asia” in Tokyo in June this year. The seminar was attended by H.E. Dr. José Ramos-Horta, Former President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, Honorable Mr. Mangala Samaraweera, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, H.E. Al Haj Murad Ebrahim, Chairman of Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), and officials and experts from governments, international organizations and academia who have been involved in the area of peacebuilding, national reconciliation and democratization in Asia. At the seminar, Foreign Minister Kishida delivered a keynote speech titled “A Peace-Loving Nation Walking with Asia” and explained that, since the end of World War II, Japan as a peace-loving nation has supported peacebuilding efforts in many parts of Asia based on three principles: Emphasis on “people” and the “field”, Emphasis on Economic Development, and Tolerance of Diversity. Then, he stated that he will contribute to peacebuilding, national reconciliation, and democratization in Asia as a new pillar of the “Kishida-Diplomacy.”

Excellencies,

When we turn our eyes to Europe, in Ukraine, unfortunately, the rule of law, sovereignty and territorial integrity have been violated, and

there have been attempts to change the status quo by force. The situation in Ukraine is shaking the foundation of the rule of law and other basic rules of the international community; therefore, this is not only a problem for Europe but also for the whole international community, including Asia. For the stability of Ukraine, the ceasefire agreement must be fully implemented by all parties, and Ukraine's state institutions and society must be strengthened. For Ukraine to become a country with resilience and sustainability, it is essential to carry out bold and comprehensive reforms. It will be impossible to ensure the stability and prosperity of Ukraine without such reforms, including the promotion of anti-corruption efforts, judicial reform and national integration.

In order to support Ukraine's reform efforts, Japan has announced assistance in the amount of approximately 1.84 billion dollars, which is the largest support provided to an individual country. As part of this support, in order to restore democracy, Japan dispatched election monitoring officers to the International Election Observation Mission of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in the presidential and parliamentary elections in Ukraine last year. In March this year, we also invited to Japan members of the Parliament of Ukraine who play a key role in judicial reform in Ukraine, and shared our expertise in Japan's judicial system, anti-corruption measures and judicial reform. We have also actively supported democratization through technical cooperation by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). We invited Ukrainian legislators in April, members of the Anti-Corruption-Bureau in May, and members of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine in June this year, and implemented various training programs on the role of the legislative body in Japan's democracy as well as anti-corruption measures and transparency. Japan is also currently offering training programs for members of the Secretariat of the Parliament of Ukraine. Furthermore, in order to promote national dialogue and integration, Japan has provided financial assistance

to the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine and will dispatch an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the mission. Japan is also cooperating with international organizations in assisting internally displaced persons and supporting reconstruction in eastern Ukraine

Excellencies,

Democracy cannot be achieved overnight. It is very fragile at the introductory stage, and requires a lot of assistance. We have seen many examples of setbacks in the past in developing countries that attempted to introduce democracy but failed at the government level and nationwide, or became failed States. Democracy cannot be consolidated without a proper system and human resources, and newly formed democracies must be supported in order to be able to follow the path of democracy. Japan will continue to support medium and long term nation building in order to lay the foundation for democracy not only in Asia but also around the world. We will also actively engage in human resource development, which is essential for nation building. To this end, I would like to confirm that Japan will further cooperate with all of you present here today.

Thank you very much.