

G7 Peacekeeping / Peacebuilding Experts Group Meeting
Opening Remarks by
Parliamentary Vice-Minister Mr. Hitoshi Kikawada



Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today to welcome you all to the 14th meeting of the G7 Peacekeeping/Peacebuilding Experts Group. Japan's new legislation for peace and security, which was approved by the Diet last September, entered into force just yesterday. The new legislation includes the revised

International Peace Cooperation Act. Japan is expected to broaden its horizon for further contribution to UN Peacekeeping Operations. As a "Proactive Contributor to Peace", Japan will participate more actively in the efforts to ensure the peace and stability of the international community, collaborating with the UN and its G7 partners.

I am also pleased to note that since its inception in 2008 under the last Japanese presidency, this Experts Group has come full circle. In the years since its formation, G7 experts have exchanged their views on a wide array of topics paramount to peacekeeping and peacebuilding - Protection of Civilians, capacity building and the rule of law, to name a few. The Group also proposed some concrete actions based on the G7's shared priorities.

Today, the work of this Experts Group is more relevant than ever. Too many regions remain trapped in conflict with devastating results for the lives of ordinary people around the globe. UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) continue to struggle with implementing complex mandates with limited resources.

There is a shared recognition that UN peace operations and peacebuilding activities are now at a critical juncture. This recognition led to the three reviews on peace and security by the Secretary-General and also the two PKO Summits held in New York last year and the year before. This G7 Experts Group is well-positioned to make a meaningful collective contribution to this process. Over the next two days, as practitioners in peacekeeping and peacebuilding, you will exchange frank views. This will lead to a deeper understanding of bilateral and multilateral efforts among G7 members respectively and collectively. It will also lead to better coordination and cooperation towards our common goal of achieving sustainable peace.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon's three reviews marked important milestones. While each report has its own focus, the three reviews are undoubtedly related to each other and should be considered in a coherent manner. The three reviews have illustrated some common concerns; namely, an emphasis on conflict prevention, overcoming fragmentation in the UN system, tailored mandates, local ownership and financial mechanisms.

Although many conflicts remain around the world, we have seen progress in peacebuilding, national reconciliation and democratization in countries with experience of hosting UN peace operations. We wish to explore lessons learned from the efforts in these countries. The lessons can be reflected in current peacebuilding efforts, mainly in Africa, while we remain mindful of the importance of local contexts.

One recommendation featured in the HIPPO (ヒッポ) report is expanding the role of partnerships. In particular, it focuses on the triangular partnership model for capacity building as a way of leveraging limited resources. The Japanese government has been promoting the triangular partnership model through the ARDEC (アールデック) project and the new support for the UN Regional Signals Academy project. We are keen to identify possible collaborations with fellow G7 members through this Experts Group meeting. This year, Japan will hold TICAD VI Summit in Kenya together with the UN, UNDP, the World Bank and the African Union Commission. Peace and stability as well as sustainable development in Africa remain one of our main interests.

I hope that you have two fruitful days and I anticipate that you will broadcast a productive message for effective peacekeeping and peacebuilding together as the G7.

I hope you also will have a few spare moments to enjoy the cherry blossoms in bloom. Please let me reiterate my heartfelt welcome to you, and I end my remarks here by thanking everyone who has made this meeting possible.

Thank you.