

**Statement by Shunichi SUZUKI,
Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs,
on the occasion of the Seventh Ministerial Conference
of the Community of Democracies**

H.E. Mr. Gantumur, Minister for Education of Mongolia

H.E. Mr. CHO, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Republic of Korea

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express deep appreciation to the Government of Mongolia and the Secretariat of the Community of Democracies for hosting and preparing the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, and to the Government of Mongolia and the Government of the Republic of Korea for preparing this panel discussion. Also, I highly value the roles of the Government of Mongolia and the Government of Poland in having led the working group of “Education for Democracy”. I feel privileged to have the opportunity to make a statement on behalf of the Government of Japan.

Excellencies,

Japan has pursued a values-oriented diplomacy based on the important principle of promoting universal and core values such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights and the rule of law since the Abe administration was formed at the end of last year. This was symbolized in the statement given by the Prime Minister Abe during his visit to Mongolia last month, in which he mentioned the three “spirits”, including the “Spirit of Freedom and Democracy”, that serve as the basis for the development of bilateral relationships. Japan would like to proactively promote these core values with the participating

countries of the Community of Democracies, including Mongolia with which we share this “Spirit of Freedom and Democracy”. With this in mind, Japan will actively support countries such as Tunisia through the “Democracy Partnership Challenge Task Force”.

Excellencies,

At the germinal stage of introducing a democratic system in a country, it is very vulnerable, and requires a lot of assistance. World history throughout the 20th century provides many examples of setbacks in this process – a still-developing country decisively attempting to introduce democracy failing to establish it at a governmental or popular level, or even cases of failed States. Certain conditions are necessary for newly formed democracies to thrive, including, for example, consistent and sustainable economic growth, establishment of a healthy middle class, and settlement of conflict among ethnic or tribal groups. Education is also critically important for achieving any such conditions.

In Japan, we say “Nation building starts with human resource development”. Japan believes it of the utmost importance that the Community of Democracies supports “human resource development”. Within the framework of the “Partnership for Democratic Development” announced in 1996, Japan has been actively engaging in Cambodia, for example. This assistance is not limited to implementing measures to establish democratic institutions such as developing legislation and electoral assistance, but also includes “human resource development”, such as cultivation of the legal profession.

Excellencies,

John Dewey, a great thinker, once stated that “a democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience.” My own understanding of this remark, to put it in simple terms, is that democracy is not only a political institution, but also a form of equal society that incorporates family, friends, companies, and regional communities. It is a historical accomplishment which humankind has come to achieve based on hard lessons.

As evident from the fact that it is only relatively recently that democracy was born and took root in society, democratic thinking is not something humans have in them innately. Just as a bicycle would fall to the ground unless we pedal, continuous efforts for democratic education of society as a whole are indispensable to maintaining a democratic society. Japan, in cooperation with those who are present here, will continue to promote democratic thinking, and lend vigorous support in this connection to the vital work of “human resource development”.

I thank you for your kind attention.