

Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Hirotaka ISHIHARA,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs

November 11th, 2013

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you and make the opening remarks for the 3rd U.S.-Japan Global Peace Operations Initiative Senior Mission Leaders' Course.

This course, co-hosted and co-sponsored by the U.S. and Japan, aims to build PKO leadership skills in the Asia-Pacific region. The course, which began in 2009 and now in its 3rd iteration, demonstrates the firmness and maturity of the U.S.-Japan relationship as partners who share common values. This is a concrete example of an initiative to strengthen U.S.-Japan cooperation on peacekeeping which reflects the global nature of our alliance. In this sense, I am pleased to have Mr. Kurt

Tong, Chargé d’Affaires ad interim of the United States and Brigadier General Mike Compton, U.S. Air Force, here at the Opening Ceremony. I look forward to hearing some words from you after my remarks.

It is also noteworthy that we can start this outstanding training course within the context of Japan’s new international security policy.

In a world where we are deepening our mutual interdependence, it is no longer possible for us to maintain the peace of our own country without carrying out our proactive responsibilities for global peace and stability. Of course, Japan has been contributing to international peace in various ways. Most notably, during the past 20 years we have dispatched about 9,000 people to 14 UN missions. Units and personnel of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces, police officers, and civilian election observers have been dispatched to UN peacekeeping missions

including those in Cambodia, the Golan Heights, Timor-Leste, Sudan, Haiti, and South Sudan. They have been highly regarded for their discipline and dedication. Japan is proud of these contributions and achievements.

Through these experiences, we believe the time has come for Japan to be even more engaged in UN activities for international peace and security, including UN peacekeeping, as Prime Minister Abe committed to doing at the UN General Assembly in September.

To this end, Japan is currently reconsidering the legal basis for security, including participating in UN collective security initiatives. Of course, Japan's peaceful orientation will never change and any reconsideration will be made within the bounds of what other countries can do under international laws.

Indeed, the international community expects Japan to play

an even more active role in UN activities, including not only peacekeeping but also peace-building programs, such as the prevention of conflicts and assistance for reconstruction. Japan has both the will and ability to live up to these expectations.

To fulfill this commitment, it is also very important to strengthen our abilities and those of our partners who stand for the shared values of the international community, such as freedom, democracy, basic human rights, and the rule of law. Prime Minister Abe also announced in New York that Japan must keep cultivating human resources appropriate to the UN activities that promote these shared values. This course is a concrete example of this proclamation.

With the cooperation of our partners, the 3rd round of the course well reflects the current reality of the PKO in the field. The course curriculum contains training on gender rights, the protection of civilians, which includes women and children, and

many other modules developed in accord with UN training guidelines.

The role of women for peacekeeping activities is also a crucial topic. It is impossible to build sustainable peace without reflecting the voices of women properly. I am particularly encouraged by the fact that about a quarter of the participants in this year's course are women, and I look forward to seeing more women become senior mission leaders.

This year, we are pleased to receive nineteen participants with backgrounds as military, police, or civilian officials from seven countries in the Asia-Pacific region. They are the best and brightest in their respective positions and, of course, are potential senior leaders for future UN peacekeeping operations. As you may have recognized, the nations contributing to peacekeeping operations today are diverse and the successful implementation of mandates for UN peacekeeping rely on close cooperation among

those civilian, police, and military leaders. Throughout this course, I hope that you will see the challenges that the senior leaders of UN peacekeeping operations are currently facing, and that you aim to identify ways to cooperate with the different sectors.

It is my great honor to inform you that we have twelve experienced and distinguished mentors and experts from all over the world who will deliver this course. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for your indispensable support of this program.

Finally, we are honored to welcome two distinguished keynote speakers to this opening ceremony. Her Excellency Professor Joy Ogwu, Permanent Representative of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to the United Nations, who will speak about the UN PKO as the Chair of the Special Committee on the PKO. Then, we will hear remarks by Mr. Edmond Mulet, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations of the UN

Secretariat, who will speak on the UN perspective.

Today, we open this training course to support your future endeavors. I sincerely hope that, through this course, you develop a common sense of mission with your colleagues, reinforce your abilities, and will engage in even more important positions as senior officials of UN peacekeeping operations in the near future. I would like to conclude my speech by wishing you all a fruitful training session over the next two weeks.

Thank you for your attention.

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