

**Statement by H.E. Mr. Mitsuo SAKABA, Representative of the
Government of Japan to NATO at NAC meeting at the level of Ministers of
Defense with the participants in the Interoperability Platform (28+24)
NATO Wales Summit (September 4, 2014)**

- It is our great pleasure that Japan was invited by NATO to participate in the inaugural meeting of the Interoperability Platform at this point of time.
- Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced in his speech at the North Atlantic Council (NAC) in May this year that Japan, having hoisted the banner of “Proactive Contributor to Peace,” would spare no further efforts to secure regional and global peace and stability. The Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) has carried out anti-piracy activities off the coast of Somalia/ in the Gulf of Aden and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations in many parts of the world. Interoperability is a key to promoting cooperation in international activities among defense authorities and conducting operations and support missions in a smooth and effective manner.
- Japan finds it highly valuable to share knowledge with NATO members and other partner countries through this platform to improve interoperability and capability of the JSDF with the particular focus on the international activities mentioned above.
- Japan has improved interoperability through bilateral and multilateral exercises with the US and other NATO members as well as partner countries. Japan would actively participate in regular dialogue on interoperability by sharing various initiatives between the JSDF and defense authorities of NATO members as well as partner countries. It is our hope that participants will also carry out active exchange of views and information on common security challenges such as maritime security and regional security situations through the platform.
- Moreover, Japan submitted to Mr. Anders Fogh Rasmussen, Secretary General of NATO in August a letter indicating Japan’s interest in strengthening relations with NATO as “partner with enhanced opportunities”

- Japan has recently made a cabinet decision on the basic policies on development of seamless security legislation. The decision is part of our efforts to secure the lives and peaceful livelihood of Japanese people and to make further contribution to international peace and stability, which will make it possible to further contribute to international peacekeeping and other similar activities such as United Nations peace keeping operations. This will help Japan enhancing collaboration with NATO. Japan intends to build on the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme and further solidify specific cases of cooperation with NATO in maritime security, the mainstreaming of the perspective of women, peace and security, cyber defense, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.
- For example, Japan and NATO share challenges and responsibility in promoting the rule of law on the world's seas. From this perspective, and based on mutual needs for exercise, coordination is underway to implement at an early date a joint exercise between the JSDF and a unit participating in the NATO Operation Ocean Shield, the first practical exercise with NATO unit.
- Turning to women, peace and security, Japan plans to send female Self-Defense personnel to NATO headquarters within this year as the first personnel contribution to NATO HQs in light of the agreement between Prime Minister Abe and Secretary General Rasmussen during our Prime Minister's visit to NATO HQs in May this year.
- Japan looks forward to further strengthening relations with NATO and partner countries in not only political, but also defense cooperation.