

**Keynote address by H.E. Mr. Fumio Kishida,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the Japan Trilateral Forum, Brussels hosted by the GMF

**“Year 2015 as the opening of a new chapter
in Japan-Europe relations”**

Mr. Marc Leland,
Ladies and gentlemen

The year 2015 is likely to be a milestone year for Japan, Europe and the world. It is an important year in which we should make a new pledge and act more proactively for world peace and prosperity. Japan is also determined to mark this year as the opening of a new chapter for Japan-Europe relations. Being in Brussels, I am pleased to have been given this opportunity to explain this determination and show the specific direction that Japan is going to take regarding its ties with Europe.

1. Significant progress made in Japan-Europe ties under the Abe administration

For the past 70 years, Japan has consistently upheld values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law, market-based economy and fundamental human rights. We also have respected the United Nations and other international systems that realize those values. Moreover, Japan has acted together with Europe and the United States to protect and strengthen those values and systems. Europe, for its part, has upheld those values as well as fundamental principles adopted under the Helsinki Final Act. In this way, Japan and Europe have acted together to protect and strengthen those values and systems, while receiving maximum

benefits from them.

“A country regarded as important” by another country may not be important any more tomorrow, if the economic situation or the security environment surrounding them changes. However, “a country regarded as reliable” by another country will not lose that status overnight. This is because winning another country’s trust takes time, and concrete actions as well as words are required.

In the process of protecting and strengthening these values and systems and of working hard for global peace and prosperity, Japan has steadily won the trust of the international community including Europe. We are very proud of this trust.

On the strength of the solid relationship between Japan and Europe based on their mutual trust, Europe has become a powerful partner in the “diplomacy that takes a panoramic perspective of the world map” that the Abe administration advances.

Under this conviction, I, as Japan’s Foreign Minister, have been proactively undertaking diplomatic initiatives toward Europe since the beginning of the Abe administration. Prime Minister Abe and I have so far visited 17 countries in Europe, having met with state leaders and foreign ministers from 40 countries.

2. Three pillars to strengthen Japan-Europe ties

In order to further reinforce the cooperative relationship between Japan and Europe, I will conduct diplomacy toward Europe based on three major pillars.

(1) **Japan-Europe cooperation for global peace and stability**

The first pillar is Japan-Europe cooperation for global peace and stability to be strengthened in the year 2015 marking the 70th year from the end of World War II.

Based on deep remorse for the past, Japan has followed the path of a peace-loving nation with the determination not to repeat the suffering brought about by the devastation of war that the 20th century experienced. We are now resolved to contribute even more actively to peace and stability of the international community. This commitment is none other than our policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace,” which is compatible with the comprehensive approach taken by Europe in its security policy. I am convinced that Europe will be an important partner for Japan when we put into practice the policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace.”

In today’s world, radicalism and xenophobia are jeopardizing our basic values such as freedom of speech, and are threatening our daily lives. The terrorism incident that has just occurred in Paris cannot be tolerated for any reason, and I resolutely condemn it. Fighting against terrorism continues to be a great challenge for which the international community should make all-out efforts. Fighting against terrorism is of course not at all fighting against Islam. It is indeed a challenge that requires the consolidated efforts of the international community in tandem with Islamic countries.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to announce the three

elements of Japan's future efforts in this area. Firstly, we will extend new assistance of about 7.5 million US dollars through international organizations to build counter-terrorism capacity, in Africa and the Middle East where ISIL and other terrorists are active. Secondly, from the perspective of assuming the G7 chair in 2016, Japan will exert leadership and enhance counter-terrorism talks with relevant countries including those in Europe. Thirdly, as the threats posed by foreign terrorist fighters are becoming ever more serious, we will also strengthen domestic measures such as combating terrorist financing and immigration control in collaboration with the international community.

In addition to international counter-terrorism, Japan has contributed to world peace and stability in the past through a variety of activities: from international peace cooperation to anti-piracy measures.

In Afghanistan, Japan has supported the capacity-building and maintenance of the Afghan national police, and implemented about 150 projects in cooperation with NATO. Moreover, in the Gulf of Aden, flights by the Japanese SDF represent 60% of total international surveillance operations in the area.

On these occasions, we were always with our friends, namely, Europe and the United States. For example, we worked up a sweat together with British and Dutch forces in Iraq and with Lithuanian forces in Afghanistan. In the Gulf of Aden, the Japanese SDF cooperated with the French navy in capturing a pirate vessel.

Since the launch of the Abe administration, Japan has further

strengthened its cooperation with Europe in the field of security. The Japanese SDF conducted a first-ever joint anti-piracy exercise with NATO forces in September 2014 and with EU-member forces under the CSDP mission in October that year. Furthermore, we sent a female SDF officer to NATO headquarters in December 2014 as part of our efforts to promote cooperation with NATO in the area of women, peace and security.

On the other hand, the basic principles under the Helsinki Final Act have not been observed in various parts of the world. These basic principles should be applied not only to Europe but also to international relations covering the entire globe. With this year marking the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the Helsinki Final Act, I firmly believe that all countries should recognize anew the importance of observing these basic principles.

Regarding the situation in Ukraine, Japan maintains its position that the sovereignty and territorial integrity shall be respected and that any attempt to change the status quo by force or coercion cannot be tolerated. While attaching importance to promoting G7 solidarity, Japan has been calling for Russia to play a constructive role for a peaceful solution of the situation. Japan has been steadily implementing economic assistance to Ukraine of up to 1.5 billion US dollars and other contributions. In addition, Japan is now preparing for the provision of fresh assistance worth about 16.6 million US dollars for the recovery of eastern Ukraine and is ready to provide at least 300 million US dollars to Ukraine with a view to helping stabilize its economy.

The security environment in the Asia-Pacific region is also becoming increasingly severe. Japan's policy of "Proactive

Contribution to Peace" and the US rebalance to the Asia-Pacific both contribute to regional peace and stability.

Multilateral efforts are also under way to this end. In autumn last year, a series of ASEAN-related summit meetings took up a proposal for strengthening the East Asia Summit (EAS) as the premier forum of the region to discuss political and security issues. These meetings also discussed the importance of respecting the rule of law in the South China Sea, as well as of addressing North Korea's nuclear and missile issues and its human rights issues including abduction.

By seizing various opportunities, Japan realized the first foreign-ministerial and summit meetings with China in two years as well as foreign ministerial meetings with the Republic of Korea. Japan has kept its door for dialogue with China and the Republic of Korea always open, and a silver lining has started to shine in through this door. Japan will strive further to make this glimmer of hope illuminate the entire Asian region.

I hope that Europe will commit further so that peace and stability will be maintained in the Asia-Pacific region.

(2) Contribution to addressing global challenges

The second pillar is Japan-Europe cooperation for contributing to addressing global challenges.

The first major challenge for Japan and Europe is to cooperate in formulating the post-2015 development agenda. Japan's ODA marked its 60th anniversary last year. A total of more than 300

billion US dollars has been so far provided to 190 countries and regions. Our new “Development Cooperation Charter,” to be formulated soon, will set forth the following idea: development should be achieved based on the concept of human security” and through “Quality Growth” equipped with inclusiveness, sustainability and resilience. Japan believes it is crucial to incorporate this idea into the post-2015 development agenda, in cooperation with Europe who have collaborated with us at both policy and ground levels.

Regarding disaster risk reduction, the Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction will be held in Sendai, Japan in March this year. The conference will adopt a post-2015 framework for disaster risk reduction succeeding the Hyogo Framework for Action. Japan is determined to make the conference successful, with high-level participation from the EU and its member countries.

Secondly, a new framework on climate change will be also adopted in Paris this year. Japan pledged last year to make a financial contribution of 1.5 billion US dollars to the Green Climate Fund subject to the approval of the Diet. We are prepared to step up cooperation with Europe toward the goal of adopting a fair and effective framework on climate change.

Thirdly, the year 2015 also marks the 20th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women. For example, we will host an international symposium entitled “World Assembly for Women or WAW! Tokyo 2015” this year. Through such effort, Japan will continuously take the initiative to globally promote the creation of “a society where women shine” in cooperation with Europe.

Lastly, in 2015, 70 years will have passed since the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT will be held in April and May, this year. As the only country to have suffered from nuclear bombings, it is Japan's important mission to pursue "a world free of nuclear weapons." This is also a long-cherished goal for me, as Foreign Minister from Hiroshima. In close coordination with Europe, we will make the utmost effort to produce a solid outcome at this Review Conference and play a leading role in responding to nuclear issues in Iran and North Korea.

(3) **Further prosperity of Japanese and European economies and contribution to the global economy through promotion of economic partnership**

The third pillar is promotion of economic partnership, including between Japan and Europe.

The "three arrows" of *Abenomics*, released since the inauguration of the Abe administration, have produced steady and positive outcomes. Employment in Japan has increased by more than 1 million people while the job offers to applicant ratio has reached to a 22-year high. Moreover, workers received an average salary increase of more than 2 percent in the spring of last year, showing the highest percentage rise in 15 years.

It is our growth strategy, "the third arrow," that will set the virtuous circle of the Japanese economy in motion. We will be promoting domestic structural reform, thereby enhancing economic competitiveness. At the same time, we will be taking

advantage of high economic growth overseas by placing ourselves into a wider economic zone. Japan is marching the path of an integrated reform both internally and externally. Thus, the promotion of economic partnership with other countries is an important part of the strategy.

The realization of the Japan-EU EPA, whose total trade value accounts for about 36 percent of global trade, will deepen and expand such trade and investment relations in a reciprocal manner. By doing so, it will also create jobs, strengthen corporate competitiveness and therefore spur overall economic growth both in Japan and the EU. Moreover, the integration of the Japanese and European economies, as two major and responsible economies, will be instrumental for the stable growth of the global economy.

In November last year, Prime Minister Abe and Mr. Juncker, President of the European Commission, concurred on the acceleration of the negotiations on the Japan-EU EPA, aiming to reach agreement in principle during 2015. Although this is an ambitious goal, we will work toward the realization of this goal by putting our wisdom together.

3. Japan-Europe relations backed by long-standing mutual trust

Finally, I will share some thought regarding how Japan-Europe relations should be.

At the beginning of my speech, I touched on the “trust” that has been fostered between Japan and Europe. This is a key word that will guide us to the future of Japan-Europe relations, with a focus on these three major pillars. Building on the relationship of

mutual trust, Japan is prepared to work for global peace and prosperity with the EU and NATO, now under its new leadership, as well as with individual European countries.

Japan and Europe, our cooperation can make a difference.

I will conclude my keynote address with our shared wish that this milestone year will be the opening of a new chapter for Japan-Europe relations.

Thank you for your attention.