

Statement by Mr. Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Nelson Mandela Peace Summit

(24 September 2018, General Assembly Hall, United Nations Headquarters)

Mr. President,

Mr. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was a man of conviction, a promoter of reconciliation and a beacon of hope for the future.

100 years ago, in 1918, a tireless fighter, a man who would change history, was born. In the following month, the Japanese Consulate was established in Cape Town: Japan's first official mission on the African continent.

More than 70 years later, Mr. Mandela was at a reception hosted by Japan: his first appearance of this kind after his release in 1990. Later that year, he was in Japan as the first African leader to address the Parliament of Japan. He stressed the need to unite not only South Africa but also the international community to solve apartheid problems through negotiations and support the efforts by the people of South Africa through providing necessary resources. He once said, "an injury to one is an injury to all," "none of us acting alone can achieve success, we must therefore act together as a united people, for national reconciliation, for nation building, for the birth of a new world".

Mr. Mandela visited Japan three times. During those visits, he demonstrated strong interest in the history of Japan's development. This history would lead to the concept of human security, which is consistent with Mr. Mandela's conviction, as it is a people-centered, comprehensive and preventive approach that empowers vulnerable individuals.

Mr. President,

We think about how much hope we placed in Mr. Mandela for our future. On the contrary, his will and deed indicate that it is upon us whom he placed his hope for the future. Japan has been committed to fulfilling the hope that Mr. Mandela placed in us. Next year, Japan will host the 7th meeting of TICAD, Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which was initiated a quarter century ago. In preparation, Japan launched discussions with former African Presidents to gain insights into peace, security and stability in Africa. TICAD 7 will offer another important venue to promote peacebuilding based on African ownership and a broad partnership with the United Nations and other international bodies.

After 100 years since Mr. Mandela's birth and more than 70 years since the UN's foundation, we need to act more quickly and effectively for the benefit of all. To this end, the UN, including the Security Council, needs to be reformed, and Japan supports the Secretary-General's initiative to rebalance UN peace activities from "reacting" towards "preventing."

Together with the international community, especially with Africa, Japan will steadily continue to take steps toward making the world a better place, following the path Mr. Mandela walked, which has now been passed on to each one of us. We will never forget Mr. Mandela's words. "It always seems impossible until it's done".

I thank you, Mr. President.

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