

The 14th Asia-Europe Meeting Foreign Ministers' Meeting

**Statement by H.E. Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan
at the 14th Asia-Europe Meeting Foreign Ministers'
Meeting**

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Madrid, Spain

Mr. Chairman,
Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan has supported the ASEM idea that we need to strengthen the ties between Asia and Europe, the two regions which used to be relatively less associated with each other.

Since I was appointed Minister for Foreign Affairs, I have been promoting "diplomacy with a sense of caring and robustness." The concept is to address global issues by demonstrating coordination skills, while fully respecting diversity. The value of Japan's diplomacy can really be proven in a forum composed of diverse countries like the ASEM.

The theme of this session, multilateralism, gives us an enhanced perspective on tackling global challenges and maintaining the rules-based order. I will make two cases for this.

First, it is important to uphold the rules and order of the international community upon which multilateralism is based, and to keep these rules updated to cope with social and economic changes.

This year, Japan assumed the G20 Presidency and has taken initiatives for such rule-making. These include the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision" on marine plastic litter, the "Osaka Track" on the digital economy, and the "G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment." The leaders of Japan and the EU also signed a document to reiterate the Japan-EU partnership on connectivity in September.

Japan is also making efforts to create high standards and rules designed for the 21st century in economic areas by concluding the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, the TPP11 as well as the Japan-US Trade Agreement and the Japan-US Digital Trade Agreement.

Second, bilateral and multilateral problems must be solved in accordance with common rules, not by imposing views through force.

North Korea's repeated ballistic missile launches violate UN Security Council resolutions and threaten the security of both Japan and the region. The international community must remain united in fully implementing UNSCRs in order to support the US-North Korea process towards North Korea's CVID of all WMDs and ballistic missiles of all ranges. In addition, issue of the abductions of the innocent Japanese Citizens by North Korea is a top priority for Japan. I would like to ask the ASEM member countries for continued cooperation towards its early resolution.

Regarding the South China Sea, Japan is seriously concerned about the current situation. We strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo as well as acts of intimidation against other parties. Japan has consistently insisted upon the demilitarization of disputed land features and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, notably the UNCLOS.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Next year, Japan will host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo and we look forward to welcoming athletes from ASEM countries. In sports, athletes compete together while fully respecting the rules of each game. Likewise, in international relations, the rules-based international order should be developed. Japan will continue to play a vital role, so that ASEM will speak with one voice in developing and strengthening this order.

Thank you very much.