

インド洋会議 2025（於：オマーン・マスカット）
宮路副大臣スピーチ
2025年2月17日（月）

His Excellency Qais, Minister of Commerce, Industry, and investment of Oman,

His Excellency Suresh Prabhu, Former Minister, Government of India,

Distinguished guests,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to commend you for hosting this Indian Ocean Conference.

Oman actively hosts international conferences and is attracting global attention as a leading venue for meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions, or ‘MICE’.

And I would also like to extend my gratitude to the India Foundation, the Government of Oman, and the Government of India for inviting Japan to participate in this important gathering.

The theme of this session is the “Economic Conclave”.

In that context, I am reminded of the following line.

“The different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea.”

These are the words of Swamy Vivekananda, a prominent Indian religious leader. They are the same words used in 2007, when the then Prime Minister of Japan, Abe Shinzo, began his address to the Indian Parliament entitled “Confluence of the Two Seas”. He stated that it was our responsibility to see the Pacific Ocean, which Japan faces, and the Indian Ocean as one. And to cooperate with like-minded countries in pursuit of freedom and prosperity in the region.

For more than 17 years since that speech, the connections between the Indian Ocean, which links Asia and Africa and is a vital maritime transportation route, and the Pacific Ocean, have grown stronger. Our common goal, of viewing the entire region as a large economic zone and pursuing prosperity together, has endured.

However, compared to that time, we have entered an era in which cooperation and division are becoming more intertwined. Compound crises such as geopolitical competition and global challenges, including climate change, are rising. They are also intensifying in the Indian Ocean region, and the more vulnerable states in particular/ are feeling the impact.

As an island nation, Japan has achieved its economic development by benefiting from free trade since the modern era. That is why I can say with confidence that the goal we have consistently pursued- a free and fair order that overcomes divisions - is an essential precondition for bringing quality growth and prosperity to the Indo-Pacific region. Such prosperity should not be monopolistic, and all countries around the Indo-Pacific must be able to share equally in the fruits of growth across this vast economic zone, or else the region risks becoming even more divided.

The underlying idea of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific, or FOIP, is not to exclude anyone or impose specific values, but rather to ensure the rule of law and lead the international community towards cooperation rather than division and confrontation. I would like to emphasize that this foundational vision of FOIP, which has been developed over almost two decades and has incorporated various voices from the international community, is crucial for the prosperity of the region.

To put this vision into practice, in March 2023 Japan announced a new plan for FOIP, which sets out four pillars of cooperation.

They are, (i) Principles for Peace and Rules for Prosperity, (ii) Addressing Challenges in an Indo-Pacific Way, (iii) Multi-layered Connectivity, (iv) Extending Efforts for Security and Safe Use of the “Sea” and the “Air”.

Today, I would like to highlight the following three initiatives to which Japan attaches particular importance, and call for cooperation with you all.

First is to promote maintaining and strengthening a free and fair rule-based international economic order. Free trade and investment are the foundations of economic prosperity. At the same time, new challenges such as supply chain disruption and economic coercion are emerging. Working with our allies and like-minded partners, Japan will encourage efforts to protect a free and fair international economic order while helping to strengthen resilience and mitigate risks to economic security. The Dialogue on Economic Security, including Strategic Trade and Technology, which we held for the first time with India last year, is one such initiative.

In addition, to address challenges such as opaque and unfair development finance, we will also work to comply with existing international rules and standards and provide support to countries that need it.

Second, to protect the free oceans, it is essential to strengthen maritime law enforcement capabilities and efforts for maritime security. Under Official Security Assistance, or OSA, a new cooperation framework launched in 2023, Japan has decided to provide equipment and other items to the armed forces of seven countries to improve their security capabilities.

In the effort of maritime security, we are proud partners with Oman, which holds a strategically important position and appreciates deeply the importance of safeguarding the free ocean. The safe navigation of sea-lanes, in which both countries have worked closely together, is indeed one of the key initiatives for the realization of FOIP.

Third, connectivity. This large economic zone from Asia to the Middle East and Africa has vast potential, but to flourish, the region needs to be connected in a multi-layered manner. To this end, in Africa, for example, Japan is contributing to the promotion of trade throughout the region through the development of the Port of Mombasa, a logistics hub in East Africa. We hope that the port of Duqm, which Oman is focusing on, will also become a key hub.

Furthermore, Japan will host the Japan-India-Africa Business Forum this month, the outcome of which we hope will lead to TICAD 9, to be held in Yokohama this August.

Distinguished Guests,

Let us together aspire for a free, open, and interconnected prosperity based on the rule of law. Japan will continue to deepen cooperation with countries around the Indian Ocean on cross-regional issues and contribute to the region's growth.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.