

Address by Prime Minister TAKAICHI Sanae
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(Provisional Translation)

1. Introduction

Mr. President, Excellencies,

The international order is experiencing a period of great instability. The free and open international order based on the rule of law that we have fostered is facing difficult challenges on multiple fronts. Amid a shifting balance of power and intensifying geopolitical competition, innocent civilian lives are being lost around the world every day.

The “stable post-Cold War era” is now a thing of the past. The distribution of goods is stagnating, people across the world are suffering from high cost of living, progress towards development goals is not on track, and human rights issues are arising in various places around the world.

Against this backdrop, has the United Nations, now eighty years on since its foundation, been failing to fulfill its role in promoting peace and stability around the world? We are even hearing such concerns today.

Mr. President,

Despite these concerns, the United Nations has never been more important than it is today in bringing about peace and stability to the world, and enabling the international community to overcome new challenges and prosper. Japan will continue to fulfill its significant responsibilities towards the United Nations. And I am here today to express that resolve.

This year marks the 70th anniversary of Japan's accession to the United Nations. In this milestone year, I would first like to address how Japan has been tackling the challenges facing the international community, working hand-in-hand with the United Nations. Then, together with you all, I would like to take this opportunity to revisit the role of the United Nations in the international community.

2. Challenges facing the International Community in light of Escalating International Tensions

Mr. President,

First, let us turn our attention to escalating international tensions.

The situation in the Middle East has been growing increasingly tense, and free and safe navigation is increasingly under challenge in the Strait of Hormuz, which is an international public good. Japan, in cooperation with the international community, has been continuing to engage in diplomatic efforts with a view to achieving an early de-escalation of the situation across the Middle East.

Furthermore, supply concerns regarding fuel, chemical products, and medical supplies, are causing significant impact on people's lives and business operations. Due to disruptions in the supply of fertilizers, the risk of a food crisis is mounting, with Africa and Asia being hit particularly hard.

For many years, we have engaged in dynamic trade in the free and open seas spanning the Pacific Ocean to the Indian Ocean, and together, we have built a strong and prosperous region. This holds true also in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea. We wish to extend this to Africa as well, to turn it into a main artery for growth and prosperity. To that end, exactly ten years ago, former Prime Minister ABE Shinzo advocated a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" at the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) held in Kenya.

However, due to the recent intensification of geopolitical tensions, free trade has been hampered, and stable energy supplies, and supply chains in general, have been disrupted.

Amid this situation, in May this year, I announced the "Updated Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)". There I appealed that it is essential for countries to acquire the capabilities to freely determine their own futures and resilience across economic, social, and security domains.

Japan places particular emphasis on the following three pillars that embody this idea.

First, Japan is engaged in strengthening the resilience of supply chains for energy and critical materials.

For global energy security, it is crucial to ensure free and transparent energy trade, engage in international coordination on strengthening oil stockpiling, and enhance collaboration between producing and consuming countries. Japan has also launched the “Partnership On Wide Energy and Resources Resilience Asia (POWER Asia)” to strengthen energy and resource supply resilience in Asia, and has been promoting cooperation in areas such as stockpiling capacity development and credit provision.

Furthermore, Japan is currently formulating a comprehensive cooperation plan aimed at strengthening the economic and energy resilience of the Gulf countries in the Middle East. Through this initiative, we will work to further strengthen the collaboration between the Asia-Pacific region, including Japan, and the Gulf countries to ensure a stable global energy supply.

Moreover, concerns about arbitrary export restrictions are growing throughout the international community. Japan is proposing a vision for strengthening supply chains, which encompasses not only the development of alternative supply sources, but also the enhancement of countries’ ability to respond to supply disruptions, in particular in the field of critical minerals.

One example is the “Resilient and Inclusive Supply-chain Enhancement (RISE) Partnership”. Under this initiative, we are cooperating with countries that produce critical minerals to enable them to play a greater role in mining, refining, and processing. In June, we established “RISE+” under the World Bank Group and pledged a contribution of 20 million US dollars to help develop the infrastructure essential for critical minerals production.

Second, Japan is devoted to enhancing cooperation towards peace and stability.

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has consistently and seriously pursued efforts towards nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the very heart of our aspiration for “a world without nuclear weapons” lies the earnest plea of the *hibakusha*: the catastrophic consequences of nuclear weapons must never be repeated.

It is Japan’s mission, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings during war, to lead the efforts of the international community towards a “world without nuclear weapons”. Japan strongly calls for solidarity within the international community to maintain and strengthen the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime, to which both nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states are parties. Furthermore, Japan will persistently advance realistic and practical efforts, including enhancing the transparency of nuclear forces, and promoting a deeper understanding of the realities of atomic bombings.

The situations in Ukraine and North Korea have reminded the world of growing risks and threats posed by nuclear weapons. There are also concerns regarding the proliferation of nuclear- and missile-related technologies through the strengthening of military cooperation between Russia and North Korea. The security of the Indo-Pacific and the Euro-Atlantic is inseparable.

The advancement of North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, as well as its use of malicious cyber activities, including cryptocurrency thefts as a source of funding, are clear violations of relevant Security Council resolutions and pose a serious threat to international peace and security. The full implementation of Security Council resolutions, under the principle of the complete denuclearization of North Korea, is essential.

Moreover, the issue of abductions by North Korea is an ongoing matter with lives at stake. The abductees are still denied their freedoms, and their families continue to suffer. This is a matter of grave concern not only for Japan, but for the international community. As the abductees and their families are aging, the abductions issue must be resolved immediately.

For the sake of the future of both Japan and North Korea, I am prepared to engage in dialogue and take concrete action to establish a mutually fruitful relationship in accordance with the Japan–DPRK Pyongyang Declaration.

Third, Japan will continue to contribute to the maintenance and development of a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

Any attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force or coercion are contrary to the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and must never be tolerated anywhere in the world.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is the most obvious example. A permanent member of the Security Council, with a special responsibility for international peace and security, has initiated an act of aggression against another country, and has vetoed Security Council resolutions concerning its own actions. In this current situation, it must be said that the Security Council is not functioning for international peace.

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan, as a peace-loving nation, has attached great importance to the rule of law in the settlement of any disputes. This is demonstrated by Japan's consistent support for, and its contributions of judges to, various international judicial organs, such as the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS).

We established a unit for peace mediation within the Government of Japan in March of this year. Japan will play a more proactive role in the peaceful settlement of disputes.

Furthermore, the maritime order based on the rule of law is currently being greatly shaken in the Strait of Hormuz. Ensuring free and safe navigation through the Strait of Hormuz for all vessels without additional costs, as has been the case, is extremely important not only for the security of the Middle East, but also for the stability of the global economy as a whole. Similarly, it is essential to ensure stability in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Japan will continue to work closely with relevant countries and the International Maritime Organization (IMO) towards the maintenance of the maritime order in the Middle East.

3. Japan's Commitment to the United Nations and Multilateralism

Mr. President,

Next, I would like to set out Japan's efforts and commitments towards the United Nations and multilateralism.

Since becoming a Member State of the United Nations in 1956, Japan has acted decisively to address global challenges, such as the eradication of poverty, economic and social development, women's empowerment, climate change, and global health. We have done so through our Official Development Assistance (ODA), channeled bilaterally or through international organizations, and have deepened our solidarity with the Global South.

To date, Japan has provided ODA totaling over 670 billion US dollars to developing countries and regions, and has dispatched almost 60,000 Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers to 99 countries. Additionally, Japan has been promoting initiatives towards achieving universal health coverage (UHC) across the globe.

Since 1993, Japan has co-organized the TICAD together with the United Nations. TICAD has served as a platform for reflecting Africa's voice in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and for Japan to first put forward the concept of FOIP. Africa is endowed with a dynamic young population and possesses enormous economic potential. Japan will continue to promote its diplomacy towards Africa so that Japan and Africa can become more resilient and prosperous together. For example, we will promote industrial development, job creation, and enhanced connectivity in Africa.

Furthermore, next year, I will host the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) in Yokohama, Japan, which Japan has convened together with the Pacific Islands region since 1997. Japan aims to further deepen our collaboration with the Pacific Island Countries region and promote the stability and prosperity of the region, including addressing common challenges such as maritime security and climate change.

Several large-scale disasters have occurred and continuously caused extreme damage around the world this year, including in Japan. Natural disasters are becoming more severe and frequent. Japan is striving to become the world's leading nation in disaster risk reduction. To share Japan's expertise and technology in disaster risk reduction and contribute to global efforts in this field, I appointed a new Minister of State for International Disaster Risk Reduction Cooperation in my Cabinet reshuffle last week. I myself, in 2015, as Minister for Internal Affairs and Communications, attended the United Nations World Conference on Disaster Reduction, where the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction was adopted. Promoting this framework remains one of our top priorities to this day. It is in Sendai that Japan will host the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in October next year.

To protect the lives of present and future generations, all States must take serious action to tackle global warming. I believe that climate action and economic growth can go hand-in-hand.

Japan has been advancing Green Transformation (GX) efforts with the goal of achieving net-zero by 2050 by harnessing Japan's technological capabilities. Such capabilities include establishing the basis for the production and engineering of materials such as green steel, utilizing the world's most efficient gas-fired power generation, and popularizing the adoption of energy-efficient data centers.

We will enhance these efforts with a view to strengthening the resilience of the energy supply-demand structure and vigorously advance the Policy Package for Wide Energy and Resources Resilience through Green Transformation (POWER GX). Furthermore, Japan will contribute to global climate action, including through GX-related efforts, such as the Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC) that simultaneously achieve decarbonization, energy security and economic growth.

Next year, Japan will host the World Horticultural Exposition 2027 in Yokohama, which is an industrial trade fair showcasing green technologies and approaches to sustainable development. We sincerely hope that many of you will come to join this expo.

There are also challenges arising from technological innovation. Whilst advances in AI bring tremendous opportunities for humanity, they also pose challenges, including those related to national security. We also urgently need measures to tackle the spread of information not based on facts, as well as the spread of propaganda. Japan took the initiative to launch the “Hiroshima AI Process”, establishing the world’s first international principles and code of conduct to govern generative AI. In parallel, Japan has been working with like-minded partners and Global South partners to co-create a “safe, secure and trustworthy AI” ecosystem, and will enhance cooperation on safety to respond to the risks of highly capable frontier AI. To accelerate these efforts, we intend to host an AI Summit in Japan at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. President,

Since the end of the Second World War, Japan has built the peace and prosperity it has today through the tireless efforts of our predecessors and the goodwill of a large number of countries. In the course of these efforts, Japan itself has consistently acted in the spirit of multilateralism towards addressing challenges facing the international community.

However, these challenges cannot be solved by any single country acting alone. Now, more than ever, the flag of the United Nations must be held high, and under that banner, Member States must mobilize the collective strength of the membership to elaborate new rules and build a framework for cooperation. I am convinced that the United Nations is the only organization capable of taking the helm on a global scale.

To this end as well, reform of the United Nations is essential. The United Nations is a “vessel”, and the responsibility for determining its contents lies with us, namely the Member States. Rather than lamenting the institutional fatigue of the United Nations, Member States should unite with one heart, vigorously advance reform of the United Nations and transform the organization into a more resilient and effective United Nations. Let us move forward, building on the achievements of the current Secretary-General António Guterres.

At the same time, the Charter of the United Nations, which is now 81 years old, should also be reviewed. Regarding the so-called “enemy States” clauses, a United Nations General Assembly resolution was adopted in 2005 to delete references to ‘enemy States’ from the Charter of the United Nations, expressing the resolve of the Heads of State and Government of all Member States. In accordance with this resolution, these clauses must be deleted. I would like to strongly emphasize this position as Japan takes pride and honor in its significant contributions to the efforts of the United Nations for the last 70 years.

Furthermore, as a matter of utmost importance, reform of the Security Council is urgently needed. The current structure of the Security Council, whose mandate is to maintain international peace and security, reflects the international situation as it stood in 1945. We need to transform it without delay into a structure that truly reflects the current realities of the international community. To this end, it is essential to expand the number of both permanent and non-permanent members in order to ensure the legitimacy and representativeness of the Security Council. A majority of Member States support the expansion of both categories.

Japan is determined to fulfill its solemn responsibility in these UN reforms.

4. Concluding Remarks

Mr. President,

In the 70 years since we became a UN Member State, Japan has consistently contributed to the peace and prosperity of the international community as a peace-loving nation, under its exclusively defense-oriented policy. Furthermore, we have worked hand-in-hand with the United Nations on the two indispensable tasks of establishing rules and institutions and providing support on the ground. This policy will remain unchanged in the future. In light of this history, Japan feels a sense of responsibility to safeguard the ideals of the United Nations as our beacon of hope, and to carry that light forward into the future.

To that end, with its renewed commitment to the United Nations and multilateralism, Japan will continue to steadily take actions. Now, at a time when the world is in turmoil, the United Nations itself must be reborn as a “more resilient and effective United Nations” and regain the trust of the international community. Together with this more resilient and effective United Nations, Japan is determined to create peace and prosperity by making the Indo-Pacific and the international community more resilient and prosperous.

Thank you very much.