

# Message from the Minister for Foreign Affairs

It is important to look back and record accurately and objectively the international situation surrounding Japan and the path Japan's diplomatic efforts have taken. This is a key foundation upon which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs not only fulfills its duty to explain its diplomatic policies to the Japanese people, but also develops proactive diplomacy that takes into account the future of the international community and of Japanese diplomacy. Based on this recognition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has published *Diplomatic Bluebook 2008*, the 51<sup>st</sup> edition since the inaugural edition in 1957.

In 2007, the Japan-US alliance, which is the cornerstone of Japanese diplomacy, was further reinforced as well as dramatic progress was made in Asian diplomacy, notably through improvements in Japan-China relations and strengthening of Japan-India relations. I have been intent on promoting "synergy and a virtuous circle" between the strengthening of the Japan-US alliance and proactive Asian diplomacy as I engaged in a busy schedule of diplomatic events, attending the United Nations General Assembly in New York immediately after assuming the position of Foreign Minister (September), the associated meetings of the East Asia Summit in Singapore (November), and the Japan-China High-Level Dialogue in China (December). I believe that Japan succeeded in strengthening its diplomatic foundations in 2007 in working towards the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit and the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) to be held in 2008, while enhancing its efforts to resolve global challenges, including the fight against terrorism, peacebuilding, and climate change.

This year's *Diplomatic Bluebook* contains in Chapter 1 a review of the international situation and Japan's diplomatic efforts in the year 2007. Chapters 2 and 3 address "Regional Diplomacy" and "Japan's Foreign Policy in Major Diplomatic Fields," respectively. Each covers Japan's diplomatic activities and developments in the international community over the past year. Chapter 4, "Japanese People Active in the International Community and Roles of Diplomacy," takes up the topic of Japanese nationals and Japanese companies active around the world and the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support them. Chapter 5, "Japanese Diplomacy Open to the Public," describes the Ministry's comprehensive activities to enhance diplomatic capacity, including its partnerships with local authorities and strengthening of its diplomatic implementation structures.

It is impossible to ensure Japan's national interests, namely the welfare of the Japanese people and the peace and prosperity of Japan, without forging the peace and prosperity of the world. Based on this principle, Japan is determined to take bold leadership in its efforts to address various international issues as it seeks to enhance Japan's national interests and create a peaceful world. I hope that this *Diplomatic Bluebook* helps to provide you with a deeper understanding of the international situation and Japan's diplomacy.



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