



CHAPTER 3

Japan's Foreign Policy in Major Diplomatic Fields

1. Efforts to Achieve Peace and Stability in the International Community

(a) Japan's Security Policies

The current international security environment has changed from that of the Cold War era. While the probability of conflict among major powers is decreasing, regional conflicts are on the increase. Moreover, threats have intensified, including the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and missiles, increases in international terrorism such as the series of terrorist attacks in Mumbai, India and cases of piracy, as well as global issues such as those related to poverty, the environment, refugees, illegal narcotics, and infectious diseases. In such a context, in order for Japan to maintain its territorial integrity, protect the lives and properties of Japanese nationals, and ensure prosperity and development, it is necessary for Japan to have a multi-faceted security policy to address not only traditional threats but also non-traditional threats. Specifically, in addition to developing appropriate defense capabilities and maintaining and reinforcing the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements, it is important to continue to actively advance diplomatic efforts to enhance stable international relations with neighboring countries and efforts towards fostering peace and stability in the international community.

Based on such a perspective, in 2008, in addition to participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations (PKO) including dispatching officers of the Japan Self-Defense Forces to the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Headquarters, resumption of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force's replenishment support activities in the Indian Ocean, and the Japan Air Self-Defense Force's successful completion

of its transportation assistance activities in Iraq, the Japanese government, holding the G8 presidency, actively engaged in various topics such as peacebuilding, disarmament and non-proliferation, international terrorism and international organized crime.

Ensuring the security of sea lanes, including those off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden, in which efforts by Japan continue to be sought, is an issue directly linked to the existence and prosperity of Japan. With a view to ensuring the lives and property of Japanese citizens, Japan will provide cooperation towards strengthening maritime law enforcement capabilities and human resource development in coastal nations. Furthermore, as for its own measures to fight against piracy, Japan will further consider establishing new legal frameworks and swiftly take appropriate measures that can be taken under existing legal frameworks.

In October, Japan was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The peace and stability of the international community are essential for promoting Japan's national interests, Japan will continue to work actively towards early realization of Security Council reform and will pursue Japan's permanent membership in the Council.

The international community at present faces numerous challenges. Japan will further expand its efforts in the aforementioned areas and develop an aggressive and proactive security policy.

(b) Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements

The Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements have effectively functioned as the fundamental framework sup-

porting stability and development in the Asia-Pacific region and brought peace and prosperity to Japan and

the Far East since the end of World War II. At the same time, North Korea's ballistic missiles and nuclear issues demonstrate that elements of instability still exist in the Asia-Pacific region even after the end of the Cold War in situations surrounding the Korean Peninsula and the Taiwan Strait, among others. In order to ensure the peace and stability of Japan and the region, under such circumstances, it is critical that Japan further reinforces the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements together with its ally the United States.

The governments of Japan and the United States continue to hold a full range of consultations so as to further strengthen the Japan-US Security Arrangements, including consultations on the realignment of U.S. Forces, Japan. Furthermore, the fact that the

United States has an unwavering commitment to carrying out its defense obligations towards Japan has been reconfirmed on repeated occasions.

In a telephone conversation held directly after the election of U.S. Senator Barack Obama as the next President of the U.S., Prime Minister Aso congratulated the President-elect and stated that strengthening the Japan-U.S. alliance is the principle component of Japan's foreign policy. Prime Minister Aso also added that the two countries should cooperate closely on various challenges the international community faces. President-elect Obama responded that he would also like to work together with the Prime Minister on these issues and further strengthen the alliance.

(c) Efforts to Counter and Eradicate Terrorism

Since the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, the international community has placed counter terrorism among its highest priorities. Counter-terrorism measures have been progressively strengthened in various fora such as the United Nations, the G8, and other multilateral frameworks, ASEAN, APEC, ASEM, and other regional cooperation bodies, as well as through bilateral cooperation.

Although the leadership of the international terrorist organization "Al-Qaeda" and other related groups has declined due to the international community's efforts to counter terrorism, their strength remains substantial.

In addition, the threat from extremist organizations worldwide influenced by the ideology and methodologies of this organization remains high even today. The year 2008 again saw a large number of terrorist attacks around the world, with Japanese nationals also affected by the threat of international terrorism. Ter-

rorism is an issue affecting more than the safety of a nation and its citizens. Through its impact on investment, tourism, and trade, among other areas, it is an issue that has an enormous impact on the economy of our nation. Japan's fundamental position is that terrorism can be neither justified nor tolerated for any reason. The activities Japan had been conducting based on the Anti-Terrorism Special Measures Law (2001) were temporarily suspended when the law expired, but activities were resumed after the enactment of the Replenishment Support Special Measures Law in January. Furthermore, a revised law was enacted in December, extending the law for one year. Japan considers counter-terrorism as its own security issue, and through a broad range of approaches, such as providing assistance to other countries and strengthening international legal frameworks, Japan will continue to actively strengthen its counter-terrorism efforts in cooperation with the international community.

(d) Maritime Security

Japan is a maritime state and trading nation that depends on maritime transportation for its imports of energy and food resources as well as much of its overseas trade. For Japan, ensuring maritime security, including safety of maritime navigation and countering terrorism and piracy, not only directly affects the existence and the prosperity of the nation, but is also crucial for the economic development of the region.

Japan is greatly concerned with the current rapid increase in the number of acts of piracy in its critical sea lanes connecting Europe and the Middle East

with East Asia, including the Strait of Malacca, the area off the coast of Somalia and the Gulf of Aden. In particular, vessels are under constant risk of being attacked by pirates off the coast of Somalia, and the Japanese Shipowners' Association and the All Japan Seamen's Union made strong appeals to the government for the dispatch of naval vessels of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force. While combating piracy is an issue of international concern, it is also an urgent matter from the point of view of protecting the lives and assets of Japanese citizens, which is one of the most

important duties of the government.

As for Japan's anti-piracy measures, Japan has been providing compilations of safety information to maritime shipping companies and coordinating with like-

minded nations concerning security, as well as providing various cooperation including the enhancement of maritime law-enforcement capabilities and the development of human resources in coastal countries.

(e) Measures to Counter International Organized Crime

Trafficking in persons, drug-related crime, cyber crime, money laundering, and other cross-border organized crimes (international organized crime) are worsening further as a result of globalization, the sophistication of communications networks and an expansion in the movements of people. The United Nations, the G8, and the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) among others, are engaged in intensive ef-

forts to respond appropriately to these issues. Japan is actively involved in such international efforts to combat international organized crime, recognizing that international organized crime directly affects the safety and security of Japanese nationals, and that there is a need for the international community to respond in concert.

(f) Regional Security

In the Asia-Pacific region, we have not yet developed a multilateral collective defense security mechanism similar to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Europe, due to factors such as the diversity of political and economic systems, cultures, and ethnicities. Instead, regional stability has been maintained primarily through various bilateral security arrangements centered on the United States. In Japan's view it is both practical and appropriate to improve and strengthen multilevel regional bilateral and multilateral dialogues, while securing the presence and engagement of the U.S. so as to realize a stable security environment surrounding Japan and to ensure peace

and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. This is the core of the diplomatic efforts to ensure the stability of the international environment surrounding Japan.

The Government of Japan has engaged in security dialogues and defense exchanges through bilateral frameworks with neighboring countries. In this way, Japan has been making efforts to enhance mutual trust and foster cooperation in the security area.

As a multilateral approach, Japan has been making use of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), a political and security framework for the entire region in which major Asia-Pacific countries participate.

(g) The United Nations

The international community of today faces many challenges which cannot be dealt with by individual countries or regions alone, such as climate change, terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, poverty, and infectious diseases. This has led the United Nations (UN) to assume an increasingly important role. In order to promote international cooperation centered on the United Nations, which is one of the major pillars of Japan's diplomatic policy, Japan is pursuing the early realization of UN reform, notably the reform of the Security Council, as well as contributing in terms of both personnel and finance to international organizations, including United Nations organizations, in order to enhance its national interests in the international community.

Japan was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in Octo-

ber 2008 through the support of a large number of UN member states. This will be the tenth time for Japan to assume non-permanent membership, the most frequent among all UN member states. In serving its two-year term as a UNSC member starting in 2009, Japan intends to participate actively in UNSC discussions. Also, by playing a role commensurate with that of a country aiming to become a permanent member of the Council, Japan will further invigorate momentum towards the early realization of both Security Council reform and the achievement of its permanent membership in the Council.

As the understanding of the Japanese people regarding the role of the UN and Japan's efforts is essential for Japan to advance its diplomacy robustly through the UN and other international organizations, Japan will also actively undertake public relations activities.

(h) Efforts towards Peacebuilding

There were many advances in efforts towards peacebuilding in 2008, both at the global level and domestically. Japan held the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in May, at which the consolidation of peace was discussed as one of the priority areas. Japan also hosted the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July, at which "Peacekeeping/Peacebuilding" was taken up as one of the main themes in the area of Political Issues. At the Summit, Japan led an initiative to enhance military, police, and civilian peacebuilding capacity worldwide. In addition, Japan's own program in human resources development for peacebuilding has also taken root, and is to be further strengthened in the years to come. At the United Nations, Japan served as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and the Security Council as well is raising its awareness regarding peacebuilding issues.

Peacebuilding, that is, seamless efforts ranging from facilitating the peace process and maintenance of security, to reconstruction and development, with a

view to preventing the recurrence of conflict, is one of the critical issues that the world faces today, along with the fight against terrorism and the prevention of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Against this backdrop, both the quality and quantity of the efforts by the international community have been intensified in the areas of conflict prevention, peace mediation, peacekeeping operations, humanitarian assistance, development of administrative institutions and reconstruction assistance.

The peace and stability of the international community are indispensable for Japan's further development. Based on this recognition, Japan considers peacebuilding to be one of its diplomatic priorities and has been making tangible efforts on the three pillars: efforts on the ground through contributions to such activities as UN peacekeeping operations (PKO), the provision of Official Development Assistance (ODA), and intellectual contributions and human resources development.



Japanese staff officer attending a meeting at the UNMIS Headquarters (December, Sudan; photo: Secretariat of the International Peace Cooperation Headquarters, Cabinet Office)

(i) Disarmament and Non-proliferation (Including International Cooperation in Science and Technology and in the Field of Nuclear Energy)

Disarmament and non-proliferation are the issues that Japan should address as a member of the international community in order to develop a favorable security environment and to create a peaceful world. As the only state to have suffered the devastation of atomic bombings, Japan has consistently called for the maintenance and enhancement of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime, aiming to attain a peaceful world free of conflicts and nuclear weapons.

In 2008, there continued to be a need for concerted action by the international community to address various types of challenges facing the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, including the nuclear issues of North Korea and Iran.

Japan's efforts to maintain and strengthen the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime included its efforts at the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit; efforts contributing to the success of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), including the International Commission on Nuclear Non-Prolif-

eration and Disarmament, established as a joint initiative between Japan and Australia; and the submission of a draft nuclear disarmament resolution to the United Nations General Assembly. This draft resolution was adopted with overwhelming support from the largest number of countries ever.

Japan also made efforts towards reinforcing the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Furthermore, regarding disarmament and non-proliferation of conventional weapons, Japan has engaged in shaping, implementing, and strengthening international instruments as well as implementing and providing assistance for projects in clearance of anti-personal landmines and the collection of small arms and light weapons in affected countries.

As for science, while advancing bilateral and multi-lateral cooperation in the field of science and technology in general as well as nuclear energy, Japan has launched its "science and technology diplomacy" and "space diplomacy."

2. Japan's Efforts to Address Global Issues and International Cooperation**(a) Promotion of International Cooperation**

Since the establishment of the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in August 2006, the Government of Japan has worked to strengthen the strategic value of its international cooperation and enhance the effectiveness of its implementation under the new organization.

Specifically, the "Priority Policy and Regional Priority Issues for International Cooperation" for fiscal year 2008 set out the following as priorities in promoting international cooperation, in keeping with the discussions of the Overseas Economic Cooperation Council under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, the International Cooperation Planning Headquarters of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, among others: (i) assistance to developing countries regarding environment and climate change issues; (ii) assistance to developing countries regarding the sharp rise in food prices; (iii) peacebuilding and the consolidation of peace, and reconstruction; (iv) the promotion of economic growth of developing countries and of Japan's economic prosperity; and (v) ensuring human security.

With a view to implementing Official Development

Assistance (ODA) more effectively, in October 2008, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Operations (OECOs) of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) were integrated in order to form the new JICA as an agency conducting integrated implementation of the three types of aid schemes, namely technical cooperation, aid loans, and grant aid. Furthermore, in an effort to ensure resources and energy and also tackle environment and climate change issues, in April 2008, the government announced the "Public-Private Cooperation for Accelerated Growth," designed to strengthen cooperation with private enterprises still further. Public relations activities are actively underway both within Japan and overseas regarding such efforts by the Japanese government.

In 2008, Japan, holding the G8 presidency, hosted the G8 Development Ministers' Meeting in April and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July. This summit covered the environment and climate change, development and Africa, and other topics as the main themes, with the G8 stating its determination to

achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Prior to the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) was held in Yokohama in May, with active discussions on boosting economic growth, ensuring human security, and other topics, announcing the Yokohama Declaration, which addressed efforts and future directions for African development.

Japan is determined to continue to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world through active engagement in the development of developing countries and in global issues. It will also enhance its efforts to promote international cooperation in line with Japan's foreign policy and exercise leadership, particularly on African development, climate change, global health, and food security.



Children in front of the large-scale power station in Samawah constructed by Japan's grant aid (December 22, Samawah, Iraq)

(b) Climate Change and the Environment

Global environmental problems including climate change and the loss of biodiversity are a serious threat to the survival of humankind. Japan recognizes that conservation of the global environment is the responsibility of the present generation to the future of the earth and has been engaged in it as an important diplomatic issue. In particular, as a nation that is a global front runner in the fields of the environment and energy conservation, making use of its high level of technology, Japan has been leading efforts to address global environmental issues by assisting developing countries in the environmental field through ODA as well as by formulating international rules such as multilateral environmental agreements.

In serving as the chair of the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit held in July 2008, Japan identified the environment and climate change as one of the main

themes of the summit and led discussions to promote negotiations on the future framework to address climate change. It also helped to foster efforts in the areas of deforestation, biodiversity, the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle), and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

As for climate change issues, discussions on the framework after the Kyoto Protocol's first commitment period, which ends in 2012, have been actively underway. Negotiations on this framework are to reach an agreement by the 15th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP15), which will be held in Denmark at the end of 2009, and Japan put forth a proposal on its fundamental approach under UN negotiations in September 2008.

(c) Human Rights

Human rights and democracy are universal values. The sufficient development of these foundations in each country contributes to the establishment of a peaceful and prosperous society and therefore to the peace and security of the international community. At the United Nations, as a part of a movement to mainstream human rights advocated by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in which the perspective of human rights is emphasized in all UN activities, the importance of human rights was reaffirmed at the 2005 World Summit.

To that end, the UN General Assembly decided in March 2006 to establish the Human Rights Council in replacement of the Commission on Human Rights as a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. Japan

has been serving as a member of the Human Rights Council since its establishment in 2006. At the third election for the Council held in May 2008 upon the upcoming expiry of the members' term, Japan was re-elected as a member of the Council, obtaining the largest vote in the Asia Group with 155 votes.

Japan will strengthen its foreign policy for the promotion of human rights and democracy in a comprehensive manner, through the development of human rights and democratic foundations based on development assistance, and by linking efforts related to human rights and democracy in multilateral fora such as the UN, and efforts in bilateral fora through human rights dialogues and development assistance.

(d) The "Rule of Law" in the International Community

Japan has set the promotion of the "rule of law" in the international community as a pillar of its diplomatic policies and has actively engaged in various efforts towards this end. The establishment of the "rule of law" in the international community brings stability to relations between nations and constitutes an essential foundation to ensure dynamic private and corporate activities at the international level.

Japan endeavors to secure its territorial and maritime interests, as well as the security and prosperity of Japanese citizens. To achieve this end, it is important for Japan to participate proactively, from the conceptual stage onwards, in the day-to-day formulation of international rules and the codification of international customary law regarding politics and security, economics, human rights, the environment, and other areas, and also to reflect Japan's principles and assertions appropriately into the structure of international law. Japan is participating actively in the codification work being undertaken by the International Law Commission (ILC) and the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Sixth Committee, the drafting of conventions in the area of private international law at fora such as the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), as well as in discussions on the framework convention

beyond 2012 to address climate change and in the creation or improvement of rules at the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Implementing the international rules formed in the above fora and peacefully resolving conflicts in accordance with international law comprise another aspect of the rule of law in the international community. The appropriate implementation of international agreements that Japan has concluded helps to maintain continuity and consistency in Japanese diplomacy and holds great significance in increasing trust in Japanese diplomacy. Japan attaches importance to the roles of the various types of international judicial bodies, and strongly supports the dynamic activities and universalization of these bodies, including through the contribution of human resources, such as judges of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the ICC, and the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS). In addition to this, Japan is making efforts towards the active utilization of international tribunals in its diplomacy, including the WTO dispute settlement mechanism.

In February 2009, Judge Hisashi Owada of the ICJ became the first Japanese to be elected as President of the Court. Judge Owada is expected to play an even greater role at the Court.

3. Efforts to Enhance Prosperity in Japan and the International Community

The year 2008 was a year of turbulence in the global economy, with the first half experiencing dramatic rises in the prices of oil and food, particularly major grains, and the latter half marked by a deepening financial crisis triggered by the subprime loan problem in the United States and a global economic recession. The Japanese economy was also in difficult circumstances, with a rapid and ongoing economic deterioration.

In the face of the drastically changing global economy and increasingly complex and worsening global issues, Japan, holding the G8 presidency, hosted the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July, receiving high commendation internationally. Moreover, in response to the unprecedented financial crisis, said to be the worst of the century, at the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy (held in Washington, DC) in November, Japan made concrete and significant contributions by sharing its experiences in overcoming its financial crisis in the 1990's and announcing its readiness to extend a loan of up to the equivalent of US\$100 billion to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). A concrete, action-oriented Declaration was agreed to at this summit, including a 47-point Action Plan on strengthening the financial system, with a review of the status of implementation of the principles and decisions scheduled to take place at the second Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy to be held in April 2009 (in London). Japan will develop active economic diplomacy in order to continue to lead efforts by the international community.

In the area of trade, in light of the worsening of the global economy, it is increasingly important to develop and strengthen the World Trade Organization (WTO) system, which promotes open international trade. The WTO Doha Round negotiations received support through political messages sent from both the aforementioned Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' Meeting also held in November (in Peru), and a revised negotiating text on agriculture and non-agricultural market access (NAMA) was issued in December. Although a ministerial conference scheduled in December was postponed due to differences in positions among relevant countries regarding major points under discussion, it is increasingly necessary to continue to hold intensive negotiations towards the early conclusion of Doha Round

negotiations. Furthermore, to address the global rise in protectionism, a robust message to restrain this trend was sent out at the Summit on Financial Markets and the World Economy and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting. It remains necessary to monitor trends in protectionist measures with vigilance.

In order to complement the multilateral free trade system with the WTO at the core, Japan is actively promoting Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) and developing rules not only in the liberalization of trade, but also in various fields such as the liberalization of investment and the movement of people. In 2008, EPAs with Indonesia, Brunei Darussalam, the Philippines, and ASEAN as a whole entered into force. Japan also signed EPAs with Viet Nam in December 2008 and with Switzerland in February 2009, while EPA negotiations are currently underway with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), India, and Australia. As for Japan and the Republic of Korea (ROK), with which EPA negotiations have been suspended, working-level consultations were held twice to accelerate consideration of, and create a favorable environment for, the resumption of EPA negotiations. Japan is also actively participating in and contribute to studies and discussion concerning a framework for economic partnership in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Furthermore, within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which discusses cooperation towards the economic growth and stability of its member countries, Japan is working to tackle issues of responding to the financial crisis and promoting the liberalization of trade and investment.

The strengthening of economic security, such as ensuring energy and food supply, is another pillar of Japan's economic policy along with the promotion of free trade and investment. In 2008, extreme volatility in oil and food prices increased concern over energy and food security both within Japan and abroad. Against this backdrop, Japan is working to further strengthen relations with energy producing countries (such as through the producer-consumer dialogues in June and December) and cooperation with international organizations such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) with a view to ensuring stable supply and markets. In addition, in order to strengthen the food security of both the world and itself, Japan developed its foreign policy at the head of state and government level through such opportunities as the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

(FAO) High-Level Conference on World Food Security in June and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit in July.

Reinforcing the protection of intellectual property rights is now one of the pillars of Japan's economic foreign policy, and Japan is undertaking various ef-

forts bilaterally and multilaterally to enhance the protection of intellectual property rights. These include taking a leading role in response to the proliferation of counterfeit and pirated goods, which is a threat to the sustainable growth of the world economy.

4. Public Diplomacy

In order to implement diplomatic policy effectively, in addition to making direct approaches towards policymakers abroad, it is important to promote interest towards Japan and work to form a favorable impression of Japan in the minds of the general public of other countries, who form the base of support for their governments' policies, by providing information and promoting exchanges. The impact of public opinion on diplomatic policy has been increasing particularly in recent years with the spread of the Internet. Accordingly, the government works on public relations overseas to promote the understanding of citizens of foreign countries towards Japan's diplomatic policies and values. The government also makes efforts to convey Japan's multi-faceted appeal and promote cultural exchanges with a view to enhancing the image of Japan among citizens of foreign countries and strengthening their sense of affinity towards Japan.

The report submitted in February by the Council on the Movement of People Across Borders, an advisory body to the Foreign Minister, pointed out the importance of public diplomacy that reaches out directly towards citizens and to public opinion of foreign countries. Its recommendations for concrete measures to further strengthen Japan's public diplomacy include expanding Japanese language education among foreigners, utilizing modern Japanese culture including pop culture, and intensifying efforts targeting opinion leaders. Based on these perspectives, the Ministry of

Foreign Affairs is developing various cultural projects, which includes the appointment of Doraemon as Anime Ambassador in March, the promotion of Japanese language overseas through The Japan Foundation, and the dispatch of volunteers through the Japan Culture Volunteers Program to four Central and South Eastern European countries in January 2009, who teach the Japanese language and introduce Japanese culture at the grassroots level. In addition, the Ministry invites to Japan foreign opinion leaders who have significant influence on international public opinion, with a view to fostering their better understanding towards Japan. The Ministry also works to communicate its policies effectively, by supporting the participation of Japanese opinion leaders in international conferences and symposia.

In 2008, intensive cultural exchange was organized with Brazil and Indonesia, as 2008 was the Japan-Brazil Exchange Year in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of Japanese immigration to Brazil, as well as the Golden Year of Friendship of Indonesia and Japan, marking the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Indonesia diplomatic relations. Japan has also been actively supporting the preservation and restoration of cultural properties and human resource development in developing countries, through cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), and other organiza-



Doraemon and Foreign Minister Koumura at the Anime Ambassador inauguration ceremony (March 19, Tokyo)



Doraemon highly welcomed at the Home for Children with Disabilities in Pakkret, Thailand.