



1. Asia and Oceania

Today, the presence of the Asia and Oceanian region is increasing in the world, as it includes numerous emerging nations and serves as a driving force of world growth. The realization of a prosperous and stable Asia and Oceania region is essential for the peace and prosperity of Japan. Economically, this region continues to boast high growth rates, supported by its rich human resources: of the world's population of approximately 7 billion people, approximately 3.3 billion people reside in East Asia Summit (EAS) member states excluding the U.S. and Russia¹, accounting for 48.1% of the entire world population²; the total nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, China, and India has increased by 4.2 times over the past 10 years³ (the global average has increased by twice), and it is expected that the future increase of the middle class in this region will lead to the further rapid growth of their purchasing power; the total amount of exports and imports of EAS member states excluding the U.S. and Russia is USD 9.3 trillion, following the European Union (EU) (USD 10 trillion). Intraregional trade accounts for 51.8% of this figure⁴, showing expanding economic interdependence in this region. In recent years, a closely linked supply chain is formed by the investment led by Japan, throughout this region. Encouraging strong growth in this region and making use of massive demand for infrastructure and the purchasing power of the huge middle class in the

region will also bring prosperity and vitality to Japan.

While such opportunities for economic growth are increasing in the Asia and Oceania region, various risks are increasing and threatening the region's stability. The security environment surrounding Japan has become more severe since the region faces such developments as modernization of military forces, increased tension among the countries in the region over intensified maritime activities and maritime issues in the South China Sea and other waters, and territorial disputes in the region. In addition, in 2012, changes in leadership are expected in many nations including China and the Republic of Korea (ROK). Furthermore, other issues such as less-developed financial markets, environmental pollution, tight supplies of food and energy, and aging populations can be factors hindering the region's stable growth.

In light of these conditions, it is becoming even more important for Japan to strengthen cooperation with the countries of the region in order to maximize opportunities for growth in the Asia and Pacific region, as well as to minimize risks. While the Japan-U.S. alliance is the linchpin of the Japanese diplomacy, Japan will build open and multi-layered networks with the countries in the Asia and Pacific region, based on rules adhered to international law. For this purpose, Japan will advance regional cooperation utilizing various frameworks such as the trilateral dialogues among Japan, China, and the

¹ ASEAN members states (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia), Japan, China, the ROK, India, Australia, and New Zealand

² IMF Direction of Trade Statistics July 2011

³ World Bank

⁴ IMF Direction of Trade Statistics July 2011

ROK; Japan, the U.S., and the ROK; and Japan, the U.S., and Australia; as well as multilateral frameworks including Japan-ASEAN, East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN+3 (Japan, China and ROK), and APEC.

The full participation of China is essential to such open and multi-layered networks. China is an important neighbor with whom Japan has developed strong ties in a wide range of areas such as culture and human exchange, and Japan-China relationship is one of the most important bilateral relationships for Japan. China has further reinforced its presence in diverse area of the international community in recent years. In 2011, the two sides had frequent high-level exchanges, and at the Japan-China summit in December, Prime Minister Noda expressed “Six Initiatives to Further Deepen a ‘Mutually Beneficial Relationship based on Common Strategic Interests’ on the Occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Normalization of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and China”.

Japan will steadily deepen the “Mutually Beneficial Relationship based on Common Strategic Interests” with China from a broader point of view, not only by strengthening the bilateral relationships but also by promoting cooperation and exchanges in a wide range of areas such as regional and global issues.

Based on the traditionally friendly bilateral relations, Japan will cooperate closely with Mongolia to strengthen the mutually beneficial and complementary relationship on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Mongolia diplomatic relations, with an aim to embody the “Strategic Partnership” shared by the two countries as a new diplomatic goal.

The ROK is Japan's most important neighboring country, which shares fundamental values such as democracy. There are frequent visits between the two countries. Prime Minister Noda visited the ROK in October. President Lee Myung-bak came to Japan in December. Summit meetings were held on these occasions. Through communications including such high-level ones, Japan will continue to make an effort to build a future-oriented and multi-layered relations with the ROK.

On the Korean Peninsula, North Korea sank an ROK navy patrol vessel in March 2010 and shelled Yeonpyeong Island in November that year. In addition to these provocative actions, nuclear development by North Korea, which announced that it had developed a uranium enrichment program, poses a grave concern. In close coordination with the U.S., the ROK, and other countries, Japan has strongly

urged North Korea to take concrete actions toward achieving goals including denuclearization in accordance with the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Japan will continue such efforts. In addition, following the death of Kim Jong-il, Chairman of the National Defense Commission, in December 2011, Japan has been closely monitoring the situation through close cooperation with countries concerned to ensure that this does not have a negative impact on peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. With regard to the abduction issue, Japan has repeatedly demanded that North Korea initiate a comprehensive investigation as agreed at the Japan-North Korea Working-Level Consultations in August 2008. Japan will continue working in close coordination with the countries toward a comprehensive resolution of the outstanding issues of concern, including the abduction issue.

As the security environment of the Asia and Oceanian region becomes more severe, the continued U.S. presence in this region grows more important. The United States strengthened its engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, for example by the first official participation in the East Asia Summit (EAS) and announcing rotation of U.S. Marine Corps to Australia in 2011. Japan will continue striving together with the U.S. to maintain the peace and prosperity of the Asia and Oceania region by firmly upholding, and further deepening and developing the Japan-U.S. alliance.

Japan has enjoyed a long history of friendly relations with ASEAN as an ASEAN dialogue partner. In addition to its relations with ASEAN as a whole, which is the center of the regional cooperation, Japan is also working to strengthen its relations with individual ASEAN member states. Among them, Indonesia, which chaired ASEAN in 2011 and is the only G20 member among the ASEAN member states, is playing an increasingly important role in the Asia and Oceania region as a core ASEAN member. Indonesia is also important to Japan as a supplier of resources, a market, and a destination for investment, and the two countries have an economically close beneficial relationship. In recent years, Japan's relations with Indonesia have been deepening as strategic partners that address various regional and the international issues beyond the bilateral framework, for example, in support for democratization in the region, disaster prevention, and climate change.

On Myanmar, since the transition to civilian rule in March, some positive developments toward

democratization and national reconciliation have been seen, including the release of many political prisoners and the realization of a ceasefire agreement with minority armed forces. Together with encouraging the Myanmar government to take further positive steps toward additional progresses on democratization and national reconciliation, Japan will enhance cooperation in the four areas; human exchange, economic cooperation, the economy, and cultural exchange, from the perspective of supporting Myanmar's reform efforts.

With a large population of approximately 1.6 billion and its geopolitical importance, South Asia has been increasing its weight in the international arena, while many countries in the region continue high economic growth. Japan will further strengthen its economic relations with countries in the region and continue to cooperate with their own efforts in such areas as national reconciliation and promotion and consolidation of democracy. In particular, Japan will further deepen its Strategic and Global Partnership and enhance cooperation in various fields with India, where Prime Minister Noda visited for the Annual Summit meeting in December 2011, as India has been increasing its influence in the international community as an emerging country. With regard to Pakistan, which has a key role in counter-terrorism, Japan encourages its own efforts towards the peace and stability of the region and the entire international community, as well as continues its cooperation mainly in economic areas.

Australia and New Zealand are important

partners in the Asia-Pacific region that share fundamental values with Japan. Japan and Australia are strengthening the strategic partnership not only in economic relations such as trade and investment but also in the area of security, working closely to contribute to peace and stability of the international community. In response to the February Christchurch earthquake, Japan dispatched emergency relief teams to New Zealand and provided emergency grant aid.

Many of the Pacific Island countries have amicable relations with Japan, and they are important partners for Japan with regard to international cooperation and the supply of fishery resources. In 2011, a variety of efforts were made towards the Sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM 6) that was held in May 2012 in Okinawa.

In addition to enhancement of bilateral relations as outlined above, it is important to utilize a variety of frameworks for multilateral and regional cooperation in order to build open and multi-layered networks.

Japan is advancing trilateral cooperation with China and the ROK. In the Fourth Japan-China-ROK Trilateral Summit held in Japan in May, the leaders of the three countries visited areas affected by the earthquake of March 2011. While demonstrating an attitude of cooperation toward Japan's recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, in response to that earthquake, the three countries also agreed to strengthen trilateral cooperation in a broad range of fields and in particular in nuclear power safety, disaster management, and promotion of renewable



Foreign Minister Koichiro Gemba, left, meeting with Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi (December 26, Myanmar)

energy and energy efficiency.

Japan believes that it is important that ASEAN, of which integration is proceeding, play as a center of regional cooperation for the stability and prosperity of the whole East Asian region. Based on this understanding, Japan attaches importance to Japan-ASEAN relations in regional cooperation. The Special Japan-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting held in April, in the aftermath of Great East Japan Earthquake, was a historically significant meeting that demonstrated the further deepening of the strong solidarity and sense of community between Japan and ASEAN. In November, the Japan-ASEAN summit adopted the "Bali Declaration" defining relations between Japan and ASEAN as well as the Japan-ASEAN Plan of Action for implementing this Declaration in light of increasing economic and political presence of ASEAN in the international community and the deepening of economic ties between Japan and Asia. These achievements will further bolster the friendly and cooperative relations between Japan and ASEAN and more active support for the establishment of an ASEAN Community in 2015.

The Sixth East Asia Summit (EAS) held in November was the first one, in which the U.S. and Russia participated. Japan attended this summit aiming to develop the EAS into a leaders-led forum that confirms common principles and fundamental rules of the region through enhancement of its political and security initiatives in addition to practical cooperation promoted so far, thus connecting its outcome to tangible cooperation. The summit affirmed the importance of international law, particularly with regard to the ocean, as public goods connecting the Asia and Pacific region as well as shared an understanding to advance cooperation and dialogue about the ocean, based on a proposal from Japan.

The Third Japan-Mekong Summit held in November featured a shared recognition that cooperation between Japan and the Mekong region countries was making effective progress and affirmed that cooperation would be promoted further

through the framework of Japan-Mekong cooperation. The summit also expressed a shared recognition of the importance of public-private partnership and of assistance for environment and climate change, maternal health and infectious diseases, and food security and safety. Furthermore, it also reaffirmed the need for further strengthening cooperation to prevent disasters in the Mekong region, along with the aid in the aftermath of the massive flooding that had occurred in that region, particularly in Thailand.

From the perspective of establishing an ASEAN Community, the efforts for rectifying regional disparities by Southeast Asian countries, such as the Brunei Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA)⁵, are also important as well as Mekong development. Japan has been implementing the invitation and dispatch program with BIMP-EAGA in the fields of tourism, fisheries, and human-resources development.

The Bali Democracy Forum (BDF), hosted by Indonesia annually since 2008, is seeing an increase in the number of participants every year, and it has become an important international forum for spreading democratization in the region. Japan supports Indonesia's effort and is also contributing to its work, for instance, by assisting to hold a seminar in support of democratization in Egypt to share Indonesia's experiences of democratization.

Japan will also support the strengthening of regional connectivity and promote people-to-people exchanges with the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

In response to Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan received words of solidarity and encouragement as well as relief supplies and donations from the Asia and Oceania region, which is geographically close and has deep historical and cultural ties with Japan. In gratitude, Japan intends to contribute to the region's peace, stability, and prosperity by playing a leading role in development of regional order and rules.

⁵ An initiative advanced by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines for the development of island areas which are less developed.

2. North America

Japan and the United States are allies sharing basic values and strategic interests. The Japan-U.S. Alliance, with the Japan-U.S. Security Arrangements at the core, has brought peace and prosperity to Japan and the Far East for more than 60 years since the end of World War II. The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the linchpin of Japan's diplomacy and security, and it serves as a public good contributing to the stability and prosperity not only of the Asia-Pacific region but also of the world.

Japan and the U.S. are closely working together and sharing their roles and responsibilities not only on bilateral issues, but also on regional issues in the Asia-Pacific such as those concerning North Korea and Myanmar, as well as on global issues such as assistance to Afghanistan and Pakistan and the Iranian nuclear issue.

The alliance is increasing its importance amid the dramatically changing international situation, such as the increasingly severe security environment in the Asia-Pacific region and the current state of the world economy, including the European financial crisis. The significance of the Japan-U.S. Alliance was also reaffirmed in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake, represented by Operation *Tomodachi*.

As reaffirmed repeatedly at the summits and foreign ministers' meetings throughout the year 2011,

Japan and the U.S. cultivated discussion on measures to deepen the alliance with a focus on security, economy, and cultural and people-to-people exchanges, including the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee ("2+2" Meeting). As the U.S. has reaffirmed its policy to strengthen its commitment in the Asia-Pacific region, Japan and the U.S. have also been consistently working together, making use of the opportunities at the ASEAN-related ministers' meetings, APEC, the EAS and other occasions, to build a prosperous and stable order in the Asia-Pacific region.

Japan and Canada cooperate closely in a wide range of areas such as politics, economy, security, and culture as partners in the Asia-Pacific region and also as G8 members, sharing fundamental values.

In 2011, Japan and Canada ensured their close cooperation through the three meetings between the Prime Ministers, which included one telephone talk, and one between the Foreign Ministers. In addition, starting in fall, there was a series of visits by Canadian ministers, including several by economic ministers. As for the Japan-Canada Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), the Joint Study on the Possibility of a Japan-Canada EPA was started in March, and the exercises aiming to launch negotiation were progressed, despite the aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake.



Prime Minister Noda, left, meeting with the U.S. President Obama for the first time after assuming office (September 21, New York, photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office, Cabinet Secretariat)

Assistance from the United States Following the Great East Japan Earthquake

In the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, assistance from the United States stood out in its content and scale, and it reaffirmed the reliability of the alliance with the United States for many Japanese people. In response to the unprecedented disaster, Japan and the United States maintained close communication at all levels of government, starting with the telephone consultation between the heads of state of the two countries on the day of the earthquake, and five telephone consultations between the two heads of state and foreign ministers in March. As U.S. President Barack Obama repeatedly articulated the intent of the United States to assist Japan in any way possible, the United States provided Japan with swift and large scale assistance immediately after the disaster, including the deployment of the U.S. Forces and the dispatch of rescue teams and nuclear experts. Also, in the private sector, charity events were held throughout the United States, and many Americans, including private sector organizations, prominent artists as well as small children sent many messages of support. Donations made to the American Red Cross amounted to USD 296 million*. Through these responses and assistance after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the strength of the Japan-U.S. alliance as well as the strong bond between the two countries were exemplified. This column focuses on Operation Tomodachi and a public-private partnership called TOMODACHI, and introduces their contents by including interviews with those involved in the operation and the initiative.

* This figure is as of August 11, 2011, according to the American Red Cross.

1. Operation Tomodachi

The U.S. Forces including the aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan which had been deployed in the western Pacific right after the disaster launched an operation designed to support the disaster-struck area without any delay. This operation, implemented in close cooperation with Japan Self-Defense Forces, was named "Operation *Tomodachi*" ("*tomodachi*" means friend in Japanese). The operation was unprecedented in scale with approximately 24,500 personnel, 24 ships, and 189 aircraft mobilized at its peak, according to the U.S. Forces, Japan (USFJ). The scope of the operation ranged from the search and rescue of missing persons, the transportation of supplies to disaster-struck areas, and airport rehabilitation work, to various kinds of assistance in relation to TEPCO's Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Station. Many heart-to-heart interactions took place in the disaster-struck area as the name of the operation said, and a lot of words of gratitude were expressed by the survivors, who witnessed the dedication of the U.S. forces. The activities not only highlighted the firm alliance between the two countries that is rooted in close cooperative relations in normal times but also provided an opportunity to reacknowledge the importance of the Japan-U.S. alliance and USFJ to Japan.



The aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan
(US Navy photo)



A message written on the ground in Onagawa Town,
Miyagi Prefecture: "THANK YOU USA"
(US Navy photo)

The words of Lt. Gen Burton M. Field, Commander, USFJ

As the Deputy Commander for Joint Support Force – Japan (JSF-Japan) from March 24 to April 11 and as the Commander for JSF-Japan from April 11 to May 31, 2011, I worked closely with the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in support of "Operation Tomodachi."

During this period, I was responsible in overseeing the entire operation, from search and rescue operations, assessing radiation levels, to ensuring a swift response to the areas affected by the disaster.

The operation demonstrated the U.S. commitment to Japan and tested the strength and capabilities forged and developed by the two allies over many years of bilateral training and coordination.

Even months after the disaster, I continued to lead the USFJ with a will to play an active role in recovery efforts. I was very impressed by the response of the Japanese government and the Japan Self-Defense Forces, and the will power and resilience of the people of Japan. It is an honor for the USFJ to serve as a member of the community in Japan and as a part of an ally in recovery efforts.



The words of Corporal Jason Chatman, US Marine Corps

I served with the Forward Command Element, Joint Support Forces - Japan from March 12 through April 5, 2011.

During this period, I went to more than 20 different missions including site surveys and transportation with the Japan Self-Defense Forces to assist in providing aid to the people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake in Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture.

On the other hand, I, as a combat photographer, also documented the operations conducted in the area with photos and movies.

While working with the Self Defense Forces personnel and the people of Japan, the main thing that stood out to me was how resilient they were at a time of great tragedy. I was also impressed by the families really depended on each other.

I believe the results of the operation in a whole had a positive outcome. It has made our relationship stronger and we have created strong bonds with our Japanese counterparts. On this occasion, I hope the people of Japan acknowledged they can depend on us to help when needed because of the strong bond we've built together.



U.S. Army personnel engaged in railroad recovery work at Nobiru Station on the Senseki Line in Higashi-Matsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture (U.S. Army photo)



U.S. Marine Corps personnel listen to evacuees at a shelter in Watanoha Elementary School in Ishinomaki City (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

2. TOMODACHI

TOMODACHI is a public-private partnership that supports Japan's recovery from the Great East Japan Earthquake, and invests in the next generation of Japanese and Americans in ways that further strengthen cultural and economic ties and deepen the friendship between the United States and Japan. The partnership is led by the U.S. Government and the U.S.-Japan Council, a non-profit organization, and is supported by the Government of Japan and corporations, organizations and individuals from both countries. It seeks to foster a "TOMODACHI generation," the next generation of Japanese and Americans who appreciate each other's cultures and countries and support the Japan-US alliance. To attain this vision, TOMODACHI implements and supports programs in such areas as cross-cultural exchange, education, entrepreneurship, and leadership development (visit <http://www.usjapancouncil.org/> for details).

Remarks by His Excellency John V. Roos, Ambassador of the United States to Japan

TOMODACHI embodies the deep relationship between our two countries. Immediately after the tragic events of March 11, we were proud to play even a small role in helping our friends in Japan through Operation Tomodachi to provide immediate relief and assistance to areas most heavily affected by the disasters. After March 11 there was also a tremendous outpouring of emotional, financial, and volunteer support from the private sector and from the American people, creating new connections between our two countries in all of these areas. In order to capture and sustain that spirit, we initiated TOMODACHI as our long-term effort to support Japan. In our conversations with national and local leaders, students, and volunteers, it became clear that in order to confront the post March 11 world, we must strengthen and greatly increase the connections between our young people in areas such as education, culture, entrepreneurship, and leadership. So through TOMODACHI, we are focused on investing in the young people who will soon lead both our countries, and the future of our relationship, that we hope will be founded upon the bonds formed by this brave new TOMODACHI generation.



Foreign Minister Gamba speaks at a TOMODACHI event (photo: The U.S.-Japan Council)



U.S. baseball legend Cal Ripken, Jr. runs a baseball clinic for Japanese youth (photo: The U.S.-Japan Council)

3. Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America and the Caribbean region has a total population of 590 million and regional GDP of \$4.9 trillion⁶ (2.5 times as large as ASEAN's). While most countries around the world are experiencing sluggish economic growth due to the effects of the global economic and financial crisis, the region achieved economic growth of around 5.9 percent in 2010. The region is further increasing its presence in the world economy as it realizes steady economic growth based on the market economy, for example, its economy is projected to grow by 4.3% in 2011. These countries are also attracting increased attention as the suppliers of minerals, including rare metals, energy and food. In addition to its increasing economic presence, the voice of the region as a whole is becoming increasingly influential in the international community, as democracy has advanced in the region.

Japan has traditionally maintained very friendly relations with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with ties between the people of each side including the presence of approximately 1.5 million Japanese descendants in the region, as well as the presence of approximately 400,000 descendants of Japanese immigrants now residing in Japan. Based on harmonious relationship, Japan has deepened these relations by supporting the consolidation of democracy and economic development in Latin America and the Caribbean countries. Today, these countries that share fundamental values with Japan such as democracy and the market economy, have become important partners for Japan in the international community. In order to further advance these relations, Japan is conducting diplomatic policies for this region under the following three pillars: (1)strengthening economic relations, (2) supporting the stable development of the region, and

(3)advancing cooperation in the international arena.

In strengthening economic relations, the Government of Japan supports Japanese companies by establishing EPAs, investment treaties, tax treaties, and other legal frameworks, as well as by consulting with the governments in the region, based on the information about the activities of Japanese companies and local situations. The Government of Japan is also actively promoting the Japanese infrastructure development in Latin America and the Caribbean countries as infrastructural demands in Latin America and the Caribbean countries are expected to increase due to their economic growth. Japan is also working to secure the stable supplies of natural resources and food through deepening cooperative relations with the countries in the region that have abundant natural resources and food.

In addition, the deep-rooted problems of poverty and social disparity in each country must be resolved to realize the stable development in Latin America and the Caribbean. Japan cooperates toward the realization of sustainable economic development in the region by actively supporting the efforts of each government to resolve such problems, through financial and technical cooperation.

Consisting of 33 countries, Latin America and the Caribbean region has a significant influence over decision making at the United Nations and other international for a where decisions are made by majority vote. In light of this, the Government of Japan works closely with those countries, in addressing those issues the international community is facing, such as environmental and climate change issues, nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, and the UN Security Council Reform.

4. Europe

Japan and Europe have traditionally shared fundamental values such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and Europe is Japan's partner for playing leading roles toward the peace and prosperity of the international community. In addition, Europe is an economic superpower that accounts for approximately 25% of the world's GDP

and also plays a significant role with great influence in the areas of making international rules and standards and forming international public opinion in the UN and other multilateral venues. In particular, the United Kingdom and France, which are G8 members and permanent members of the UN Security Council, as well as Germany and Italy, and

⁶ GDP and population statistics are cited from the *ECLAC Statistical Yearbook 2011*.

the EU, also G8 members, continue to have great influence on the international community. At the same time, the power of taking action and the presence of other European states or international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are increasing in areas where they have their own strengths. Strengthening relations with Europe is extremely important to Japan to effectively address various global issues, such as security in general, world economy and finance, environmental issues, the fight against terrorism, and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In addition, exchange of opinions and deepening mutual understanding between Japan and European states through multi-layered dialogue including VIP visits on how to cooperate in the regions around the world is highly significant for earning support to conduct diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region and constructing the environment in order to advance diplomacy effectively in the regions, such as the Middle East and Africa.

The European sovereign debt crisis, which began with the issue of Greek sovereign debt that was revealed when the change in political administration took place in 2009, has spread to other European

states such as Ireland and Portugal, and there are concerns about its effect on the world economy. Although the EU is making efforts to stabilize the financial markets, for example by creating the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) in May 2010, there is also a possibility that the European sovereign debt crisis could affect not just economic and financial matters but also the future course of European integration, as well as political and diplomatic matters. In light of the possible influence of this crisis on the world economy and on the political role that Europe can play, Japan is aware of the necessity to cooperate to the maximum extent possible.

For years, Japan and Europe have maintained close relations not just at the governmental level but through citizen-level exchanges and other activities as well, and European governments and citizens provided great amount of supports in response to the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 2011.

Another development in Japan's relations with the EU is the conduct of works toward launching of negotiations of a Japan-EU EPA and a binding agreement covering political and other sectoral cooperation based on the agreement reached at the Japan-EU Summit in May 2011.



The representatives of the "Heroes of Fukushima" after receiving the Prince Asturias Award for Concord from H.R.H Felipe de Borbón, the Prince of Asturias at the presentation ceremony (October 21, Oviedo City in Spain, photo: the Prince of Asturias Foundation)

Great East Japan Earthquake :

Working as a Liaison Officer for the EU Emergency Aid Team

Almost all European countries* offered assistance in the wake of the earthquake on March 11. Japan eventually received rescue teams from five countries and relief supplies from 19 countries, and funds from many other countries of Europe. Rescue and aid teams from different countries and regions were often accompanied by liaison officers from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan when they went to the disaster-hit area. They were needed as they are familiar with the countries where the teams came from, to help the teams and the Japanese side share information and communicate with each other better and to solve problems that may have arisen in the field, in a flexible manner.

As one of such officials, I accompanied the civil protection team from the European Union (EU). Between March and April, this team delivered relief supplies from nine EU member countries out of the 19 European countries that provided assistance. They delivered bedding and radiation meters to Ibaraki, Tochigi, and Miyagi prefectures, and also taught people how to use these meters. I worked hard to address the difficult task of reconciling the stance of the donors with that of the recipients. The donors told me that upon being informed of the needs in the disaster-hit area, they would refer to the member countries and report how much they could deliver. The recipients, on the other hand, said that upon being informed of what the donors can deliver, they would refer to the affected areas and tell how much they need. The relief items were delivered as soon as they became available after this coordination process. The situation was so critical that it was impossible to wait for all the supplies to arrive from the EU side. The team thus repeated the task of receiving just-arrived items at Narita airport and delivering them to the afflicted areas. The team members had to travel every day: for instance, they made a one-day round trip between Narita and the outskirts of Sendai; and the next day, they delivered radiation meters to Ibaraki Prefecture and taught people how to use them there.

Many of the members of civil protection team from the EU were fire fighters or rescue squad members by profession. One day, after the team delivered supplies to the gymnasium of a fire academy in Tochigi Prefecture, they toured the Disaster Preparedness Learning Center at the site and saw the facilities that give simulations for visitors to experience an earthquake, heavy rain, gale and smoke, as well as the exhibits of disaster response kits. The team members, in learning from Japan, were able to reflect on their individual circumstances. One member told me that he was surprised at the high level of Japan's disaster preparedness education for the public and would report this back home. At the same time, he has realized how devastating the March 11 disaster was, commenting "Even with such a high level of disaster preparedness, Japan could not withstand the tsunami."

Looking ahead, I hope that Japan and the EU will further strengthen bilateral ties in the area of disaster preparedness and disaster response as well.

Kazuo Chujo

Counsellor, the Mission of Japan to the European Union
(Mr. Chujo accompanied the EU emergency aid team as a MOFA liaison officer.)



Mr. Chujo, at the time accompanying European Commission members and emergency aid team from EU, in Kitaibaraki City, Ibaraki Prefecture



Team members unloading relief supplies with Japan's Self-Defense Forces personnel in Yamamoto Town, Miyagi Prefecture.

* "European countries" here refers to the counties covered by Section 4, Chapter 2: EU member states (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom) and Albania, Andorra, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Monaco, Norway, Serbia and Montenegro, and Ukraine.

5. Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus

The strategic environment of the Asia-Pacific region is drastically changing and closer cooperation between Japan and Russia not only serves the strategic interests of the two countries, but also contributes to the stability and prosperity of the region. Such recognition led to some move in 2011 to develop the relations in a positive manner, while the relations between Japan and Russia had not been described as good due to Russia's hardest position on the issue of the Northern Territories.

In particular, after Great East Japan Earthquake in March, Russia supplied aid in the forms of relief materials and rescue workers⁷, and proposed to strengthen Japan-Russian cooperation in the field of energy. In addition, youth from disaster-affected areas were invited to visit Vladivostok and Moscow, and there was close communication between the related authorities on the management of damage from nuclear accident.

In 2011 Japan and Russia had two summits and four meetings of foreign ministers along with active consultation and dialogue at an administrative level. Discussions were held between the Japanese and Russian governments about a wide range of fields, such as security, the issue of the Northern Territories, economic matters including nuclear power and energy, and cooperation on the international fola.

There still remains a wide gap between Japan and Russia on their positions concerning the issue of the Northern Territories, the most outstanding issue between the two countries. While the governments of Japan and Russia have been making efforts for the development of cooperation in various fields, it is required more than ever to conclude a peace treaty by resolving the territorial issues, in order to establish a genuine partnership between the two countries.

The countries of Central Asia and the Caucasus⁸ occupy an important position in geographical terms as the regions link Asia with Europe, and Russia with the Middle East. The maintenance of peace and prosperity in these regions, therefore, benefits the whole of Eurasia. These regions, abundant energy and mineral resources, are also important from the perspective of diversification of natural resources and energy supply of Japan which intends to strengthen its relations with the countries of these regions. Japan is advancing cooperation with the countries of these regions. With regard to Central Asia in particular, Japan is contributing to the regional stability and the promotion of the inter-regional cooperation, as well as promoting broad-ranging cooperative relations with the region under the framework of the "Central Asia plus Japan" Dialogue since 2004.

6. The Middle East and North Africa

The Middle East and North Africa (hereinafter referred to as the Middle East region) occupies a geopolitically important location, linking Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Central Asia, and South Asia, and has important shipping lanes for international commerce, and furthermore supplies large quantities of oil and natural gas. Thus, the peace and stability of this region is vital to the peace and stability of the entire international community, including Japan. In 2011, this region saw massive upheaval not seen for decades, referred to as the "Arab Spring". Long-lived regimes were overturned in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya,

on the one hand, and Yemen on the other, which is on the process of regime transition. While processes of political reforms such as elections and formation of new cabinets are advancing in these countries, it is time that economic and social reforms are entering critical stages. While such transitions and reforms are taking place in some nations, suppression of the public and disorder continues in Syria despite repeated calls to stop them by the international community including Japan. Although the Arab League sent observation teams to locations across Syria at the end of the year 2011, there remains

⁷ Two relief teams that were totaling 156 workers were dispatched to Japan, and relief materials were received in the forms of 17,200 blankets, 400 personal radiation dosimeters, and 5,000 masks. In addition, aid and donations were received from numerous individuals and organizations as well.

⁸ The countries of Central Asia refer to the five countries of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan, while the countries of the Caucasus refer to the three countries of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia.

little prospect for improvement in the situation.

The Middle East region also continues to face diverse issues including the Iranian nuclear issue, stability and reconstruction of Iraq and Afghanistan, the Middle East peace process, and terrorism. Resolving these issues is extremely important not only for the peace and stability of the region itself but also for those of the entire international community, including Japan that imports approximately 90% of its crude oil from this region.

Under these circumstances, Japan is actively working in coordination with the international community toward peace and stability in the Middle East region, including through participation in the Deauville Partnership launched by the G8. Japan is providing a variety of assistance including support for the establishment of fair political and administrative management, human resources development, and promotion of employment and industrial development for countries in transition to democracy in order to back the efforts of each country. Japan is also working to achieve peace in the Middle East and the peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the Iranian nuclear issue on the basis of its unique relationship with the region, in close coordination with the countries concerned, by conducting political dialogues and dispatching special envoys. Japan is also providing assistance centered on economic cooperation that contributes to regional peace and stability, including aid for the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq as well as for the establishment of a Palestinian state.

A sharp increase in the youth population of the Middle East region in recent years is a source of dynamism generating economic development. Countries of the Middle East region have been achieving steady economic development in recent

years by incorporating this dynamism. Also, they are transforming their countries into attractive markets and investment destinations for foreign countries by advancing industrial diversification. Japan views such economic development in the Middle East region as a good opportunity for further developing economic and business relations and emphasizes the advancement of economic diplomacy through efforts including holding the Japan-Arab Economic Forum. Japan also believes that strengthening of economic relations in such a manner contributes to the stability and advancement of the political and economic situations in each country. Japan is further strengthening its relations with countries that export natural resources including oil and natural gas in order to secure stable supplies of natural resources and energy. Japan is also arranging legal frameworks such as free trade agreements (FTAs), investment treaties, and tax treaties as a foundation for strengthening economic relations, as well as promoting efforts such as the development of Japanese infrastructure overseas.

Furthermore, in recent years Japan has been striving to deepen mutual understanding by building up multi-layered relations across wide-ranging fields, including renewable energy, politics, science and technology, education and culture, and the environment, in addition to traditional efforts to reinforcement of cooperation in the fields of oil, natural gas, and economy. Among the various frameworks for dialogue, the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative "Forum for the Future" ministerial meeting is an important venue for dialogue and cooperation with G8 countries on the political, economic, and social development of the Middle East region, and Japan will continue to actively participate in this forum.

7. Sub-Saharan Africa

In recent years, Africa has been realizing relatively high economic growth, compared with the industrialized countries, and many conflicts have been concluded. The independence of South Sudan, as Africa's 54th state, on July 9 which followed the result of the referendum, gave a strong impression of the further progress of peace and democratization in Africa. On the other hand, conflicts continue in such regions as Somalia, and many Africans are still suffering from drought, poverty and infectious diseases.

Under such circumstances, Africa is becoming increasingly important for Japan's diplomacy from the perspectives that (1)it is Japan's duty as a responsible member of the international community to earnestly work toward the resolution of the various problems facing Africa, and by doing so Japan will earn trust of the international community (2)it is also important for Japan's economy to strengthen the economic relationship with Africa, a potentially huge market sustains high rates of economic growth which is endowed with abundant

natural resources and a growing population, and (3) the cooperation of African countries is essential to further address global issues such as UN Security Council Reform and climate change.

While valuing its solidarity with Africa, which was reaffirmed in the aftermath of Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan continued to actively advance its policy on Africa in 2011, focusing mainly on (1) contributions to peace and stability, (2) development assistance and promotion of trade and investment, and (3) response to global issues.

For peace and stability in Africa, Japan advanced various cooperation measures for the consolidation of peace in the conflict regions which include such as Sudan and Somalia. Japan decided to dispatch units of the Japan Self-Defense Forces to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS), a UN peacekeeping operation (PKO) to support the nation building efforts of this newly independent country. Japan also provided election support and dispatched election observation teams to support the democratization process in such countries as Niger, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Liberia. Furthermore, Japan continued to provide support for PKO training centers in Africa,

to enhance the peacekeeping capability of African countries.

In the area of development assistance, trade and investment, Foreign Minister Matsumoto attended the Third Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) Ministerial Follow-up Meeting in Senegal in May, in the aftermath of Great East Japan Earthquake, as the co-chair of the meeting. In this meeting, Japan reiterated its unequivocal determination to faithfully implement the pledges made at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) in 2008: which include (1) doubling Japan's official development assistance (ODA) to Africa by 2012 and (2) supporting doubling private-sector investments. In addition, in the UN General Assembly in September, Prime Minister Noda announced the plan to hold the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) in 2013 in Japan. Japan is seeking to promote business in Africa as it strengthens public-private partnership, through such means as dispatching, the Public-Private Joint Mission for Promoting Trade and Investment to Africa to Sudan, South Sudan, and Kenya in October.