

International Situation in 2020 and Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

Japan aspires to ensure its national interests in the political, security and economic domains, as well as to maintain and develop a desirable international order that is based on universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. To this end, Japan needs to pursue strategic diplomacy, while rationally accounting for and adapting to changes in the international situation.

Below is a broad overview of the international situation surrounding Japan and outlook for its diplomacy.

1-1 Overview of the International Situation

The world is undergoing epoch-making changes. Changes in the balance of power in the international arena are accelerating and becoming more complex, while there is a broadening and diversifying array of security challenges, such as emerging challenges related to economic security and others as well as threats in new domains, including outer space and cyberspace. Today, no single country can protect its peace and security on its own.

At the same time, protectionism and inward-looking trends are becoming conspicuous in reaction to rapid globalization, even in countries that have enjoyed the benefits of free trade, such as the U.S. and Europe. Furthermore, the

international order based on universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, which has underpinned the stability and prosperity of the world, is being challenged by unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion, as well as by the spread of terrorism and violent extremism.

Against this backdrop, the global spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has threatened human security and exacerbated the trends described above, transforming economies and societies in many parts of the world.

(1) Changes in the International Situation in the Mid- to Long-term

A Changes in the Balance of Power

The balance of power in the international community is shifting dramatically due to the rise of emerging countries, among other factors. Interstate competition, in which states seek to shape an international order to their advantage as well as to increase their influence, is emerging more prominently. Meanwhile, universal values are facing severer challenges, with the COVID-19 crisis being used to attempt to change the status quo, and there is growing uncertainty over the existing order.

B Diversification and Increased Complexity of Threats

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles, as well as escalating international terrorism, remain grave challenges for the international community.

At the same time, the scope of national security has further broadened to encompass economic and technological fields in recent years, requiring the enhancement of security policy efforts in these fields. In particular, progress has been made in a new paradigm of technological innovation which can bring about essential changes to the nature of society and people's lives, such as the Internet of Things (IoT), the fifth-generation mobile communications system (5G), artificial intelligence (AI) and quantum technology. Countries are vying with each other to develop technologies linked to national competitiveness and are stepping up efforts to apply these technologies in the security domain. The success or failure of innovations is anticipated to have considerable implications for the security environment.

Furthermore, recent advances in science and technology are ramping up activities in outer space and cyberspace. While this presents major opportunities, it also brings about new risks and threats, making international rule-making an imperative from a security perspective.

C Global Economic Trends (the Emergence of Protectionism, Inward-Looking Trends and Economic Friction)

The world economy has become more interdependent than ever through the development of the global supply chain and financial systems, in line with the progress of globalization and innovation, such as digital technology. Thus, factors such as economic shocks and fluctuations in commodity prices in one region have increasing impacts on other regions or the entire global economy. Moreover, innovative progress in information and communication technologies by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, represented by AI, robotics and Big Data, has been driving further

transformation of the international economic order. Furthermore, to enable smoother cross-border economic activities, the maintenance and promotion of a rules-based economic order has become all the more indispensable.

Meanwhile, protectionism and inward-looking trends that have spread as a backlash against globalization are still observed across the world. The backgrounds of such trends are diverse: growing domestic income inequality, job losses, a rise in migrants, global environmental problems, etc. These trends have become even more pronounced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

D Increasing Seriousness of Global Challenges

Ending poverty is the first goal of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are development goals for the entire international community. Around the world, the COVID-19 crisis pushed more people into poverty and deepened impoverishment, exacerbating the situation for more vulnerable populations. In such circumstances, efforts to eradicate poverty must be accelerated from the perspective of human security as well.

Infectious diseases threaten human life and health and profoundly impact society as a whole. With the globalization, cross-border movements of people have increased dramatically, and outbreak and transmission of infectious diseases have become a more serious threat. COVID-19 has been raging across the globe since December 2019 with unabated vigor. In January 2021, the world's cumulative cases of COVID-19 infection surpassed 100 million. The virus continues to have a substantial impact on the global economy, and hopes are pinned on the resumption of socio-economic activities as vaccines are rolled out.

In addition, the severity of natural disasters is forecast to continue to intensify with the effects of climate change, and there is a concern that this will have a profound impact, especially on people in vulnerable environments. Climate change measures are drawing attention also in the context of recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.

To resolve these global challenges, it is crucial to steadily make efforts on the SDGs and address social, economic and environmental issues in an integrated manner, making active use of science and technology and innovations.

(2) The Very Severe Security Environment in East Asia

The security environment surrounding Japan is becoming more testing and uncertain at a remarkably faster speed. Furthermore, countries with outstanding military capabilities both in terms of quality and quantity are concentrated around Japan, and there is a clear tendency of further reinforcement of military capabilities and acceleration of military activities.

A Nuclear and Missile Development by North Korea

North Korea has not carried out the dismantlement of all weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles of all ranges in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner, in accordance with a series of relevant United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions. Following on from 2019, North Korea launched ballistic missiles four times in March 2020 and again in March 2021. It also displayed possible new intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) at the military parade celebrating the 75th anniversary of the Workers' Party of Korea (WPK) in October and at the military parade celebrating the 8th Congress of the WPK in January 2021.

B China's Strengthening of Military Power without Transparency and Unilateral Attempts to Change the Status Quo

The peaceful development of China should be welcomed by Japan and the entire international community. China, however, continues to increase its defense budget and has been strengthening and modernizing its military power extensively and rapidly without transparency. It also aims to

secure superiority in new domains, such as outer space, cyberspace and the electromagnetic spectrum. China continues actions based on its assertions that are incompatible with the existing order of the law of the sea and unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion at sea and in the airspace in areas such as the East and South China Seas.

In the East China Sea, amid the continuation of intrusions by China Coast Guard (CCG) vessels into Japan's territorial sea around the Senkaku Islands, the number of hours for which such vessels were inside Japan's territorial sea and the number of days for which they sailed inside Japan's contiguous zone reached the record high. CCG vessels also repeatedly approached Japanese fishing vessels. Moreover, activities by Chinese military vessels and aircraft expanded and intensified. In addition, China has been continuing unilateral development of resources in the maritime areas pending delimitation of the Exclusive Economic Zone and the continental shelves. Furthermore, in recent years China has been carrying out numerous surveys without Japan's consent or in a manner that deviates from Japan's consent in the waters around Japan, including the East China Sea.

The issue over the South China Sea is a legitimate concern of the international community that is directly linked to the peace and stability of the region. China has announced the establishment of new administrative districts in the South China Sea called the "Nansha District" and the "Xisha District" and has pursued further militarization of reclaimed features, all of which are unilateral attempts to change the status quo that run counter to the rule of law and openness, and attempts to make the results of these actions a fait accompli. Additionally, China has continued actions that increase tensions in the region, including conducting repeated military exercises and missile launches.

1-2 Developments Centered Around the U.S. and China

(1) Transition from the Trump Administration to the Biden Administration

A The U.S. under the Trump Administration

In 2020, the final year in office for President Trump, the U.S. faced significant challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic and racial divides.

In late January, the first COVID-19 case in the U.S. was confirmed, and on the 31st of that month, President Trump declared a public health emergency. However, infections spread rapidly in the U.S. in March, and by the end of the month, the cumulative number of cases surpassed that of China, making the U.S. the country with the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world. Accordingly, curfews and restrictions on economic activities were imposed throughout the U.S. While the U.S. economy had a strong performance until then, it suffered a major blow following such measures. The unemployment rate, which had hit a 60-year low in February before cases spread (3.5%), rapidly declined to the worst level in the postwar period in April (14.8%). The real GDP growth rate for 2020 decreased by 3.5% compared to the previous year, marking the second lowest growth rate in the postwar period after that in 1946 (-11.6%).

Meanwhile, protests against racial discrimination, which had been casting a dark shadow over the American society, intensified across the country. In May, a black man, Mr. George Floyd, was neck restrained by the knee of a white police officer in Minnesota and died. A video showing Mr. Floyd being pinned to the ground and pleading, "I can't breathe," went viral, and a protest against racial discrimination developed into a nationwide Black Lives Matter movement. Clashes with police led to many arrests, casualties and injuries in some cities, and the removal and destruction of statues of historical figures, including bronze statues of Civil War Confederate generals. In August, protests were reignited by the shooting of a black

man, Mr. Jacob Blake, by a white police officer in Wisconsin. With regard to the Black Lives Matter movement, President Trump stated that to protect the people from riots by the far-left and anarchists, he would take stern measures by giving top priority to maintaining "law and order." As a result, racial disparities and the maintenance of "law and order" became major issues in the presidential election.

In the face of these major domestic challenges, the Trump administration advocated an "America First" diplomacy and promoted its unique foreign policy. The Trump administration had seceded or withdrawn from multilateral arrangements, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Human Rights Council, and the Paris Agreement. In July, the U.S. notified the United Nations (UN) of its intention to also withdraw from the World Health Organization (WHO) in one year. Furthermore, in July, it announced plans to reduce the number of U.S. troops stationed in Germany, further distancing the U.S. from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

B Inauguration of the Biden Administration

In the presidential election on November 3, former Vice President Joseph Biden received more than 81 million popular votes, the most in history, and the Biden administration was inaugurated on January 20, 2021. Even before taking office, President Biden announced that he would cooperate with other countries, and outlined the priorities of the new administration including measures against COVID-19, reconstruction of the economy, racial equity and response to climate change. On his first day in office, President Biden signed 17 executive actions, including executive orders, and demonstrated a new U.S. at home and to the world. This included reversing the measures taken by the previous Trump administration, such as reversing the decision to withdraw from the WHO and returning to the Paris Agreement. On February 8, 2021, the U.S. announced its return to

the UN Human Rights Council, which the U.S. had withdrawn from under the Trump administration.

While expectations for the Biden administration are high in and outside of the U.S., the new administration faces a difficult task at the helm. The U.S. has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the world (over 28 million as of March 2021), and the prolonged fight against COVID-19 is casting a shadow on the U.S. economy. The Democratic Party secured a majority in both the House and Senate in the congressional elections held on the same day as the presidential election. Although this was a boost for the new administration, the difference in the number of seats between the two parties is minimal in both houses, and it remains to be seen whether the new administration will be able to cooperate with the Republicans in Congress to advance its campaign promises. In addition, the fragmentation of U.S. society is becoming more serious, as was shown by the January 6, 2021, mob attack on the U.S. Capitol, and the administration is charged with the task of uniting the American people.

(2) The Further Rise of China

In recent years, China has made a remarkable rise in various fields, including economy, military and security, and diplomacy.

Due to COVID-19, China's economy temporarily recorded negative growth for the first time since 1992. However, the economy recovered, driven by production, investment and exports. While the economies of major countries experienced negative growth, China had a positive real GDP growth rate in 2020 of 2.3%.

In addition, China's defense spending has increased about 44-fold over the past three decades. According to an annual report released by the U.S. Department of Defense in September, China has already gained capabilities equal to or exceeding those of the U.S. in a number of areas, including shipbuilding, land-based conventional ballistic and cruise missiles, and integrated air defense systems.

Furthermore, China sought to expand its international influence in diplomacy while the former Trump administration advocated "America First." For example, in April, after President Trump announced the suspension of contributions to the WHO, the Government of China announced an additional contribution of 30 million US dollars to the WHO. In addition, China has actively used provision of medical supplies and vaccines for its diplomacy in response to the global spread of COVID-19, with President Xi Jinping announcing that vaccines are a "global public good." Moreover, China has developed legislation to protect its maritime interests. In January 2021, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed the China Coast Guard (CCG) Law, which stipulates the CCG's duty of law enforcement to protect its maritime interests, and this law entered into force the following February.

(3) U.S.-China Relations

U.S.-China relations during the former Trump administration became more tense in 2020. Following on from 2019, the two countries had intense confrontation in a variety of areas, including trade issues and competition over advanced technologies. Their confrontation also extended to the realms of politics, diplomacy, military and security, media and education, and the two countries frequently condemned and sanctioned the other country. For example, the U.S. Congress passed the Uyghur Human Rights Policy Act in June and the Hong Kong Autonomy Act in July, raising calls for strict sanctions and other measures against China. Furthermore, tighter regulations were imposed on many Chinese companies on the grounds of security concerns and other reasons. In addition, when the U.S. closed the Chinese Consulate General in Houston at the end of July, citing it as a base for espionage and intellectual property theft, China responded by closing the U.S. Consulate General in Chengdu. Furthermore, President Trump emphasized China's responsibility for spreading COVID-19, describing it as a

“Chinese virus.” In January 2021, the U.S. determined the human rights situation in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region as constituting “genocide.”

The Biden administration, while maintaining a tough stance toward China, is expected to explore cooperation with China wherever possible, such as issues related to international health and climate change. In February 2021, the first U.S.-China Summit telephone call was held since President Biden took office. The U.S. Department of State announced that President Biden underscored his concerns about China’s coercive and unfair economic practices, crackdown in Hong Kong, human rights abuses in Xinjiang, and increasingly assertive actions in the region, including toward Taiwan. On the other hand, according to the Chinese announcement, President Xi Jinping stated that cooperation is the only right choice for both sides and proposed the reestablishment of various dialogue mechanisms. This shows his expectation to build cooperative relations with the new administration. The establishment of stable relations between the U.S. and China, the world’s first and second largest economies, concerns not only Japan but also the international community as a whole, and future developments will continue to be closely watched.

2 Outlook for Japan's Diplomacy

In the face of major global changes and challenges, Japan must take on a greater responsibility and role than before, while collaborating with other countries. In particular, the role expected of Japan is to uphold its respect for multilateralism and take on a greater leadership role in establishing a free and fair order and rules on both the security and economic fronts, looking ahead to a post-COVID-19 world. Based on this recognition, Japan, while reinforcing its foreign policy implementation apparatus, including by bolstering Japan’s missions overseas in terms of both quantity and quality, will continue to make the

utmost efforts to promote its national interests and contribute to the peace and prosperity of the international community. Furthermore, Japan will further strengthen its public diplomacy to obtain understanding of and support for Japan’s policies, initiatives, and positions.

(1) “Diplomacy with a Sense of Caring and Robustness”

In order to create a desirable international environment that is stable and predictable for Japan, it is important to build trust and cooperative relations with countries worldwide and the international community through diplomatic efforts, to strengthen the basis for stability and prosperity of the international community, and to prevent the emergence of threats in advance. In this respect, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has advanced “diplomacy with a sense of caring and robustness” under the policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace” based on the principle of international cooperation—diplomacy that respects diversity, in which Japan exerts its ability to coordinate in the international community and stands firm where a resolute response is needed.

Prime Minister Abe visited 80 countries and regions (176 countries and regions in total) since the inauguration of his second Cabinet in December 2012 until his resignation in September 2020. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Suga visited Viet Nam and Indonesia for his first overseas visit since taking office in September. Foreign Minister Motegi, since his appointment in September 2019, visited 34 countries and regions (35 countries and regions in total) and held more than 120 telephone calls and video conferences (as of January 2021). As a result, Japan’s presence in the international community has steadily risen, and the personal relationships of trust between Prime Minister Suga and foreign leaders as well as between Foreign Minister Motegi and other foreign ministers have also deepened.

As a stabilizing force in the international community, Japan will continue to build relationships of

trust with other countries' leaders, and while promoting its national interests, lead the international community for peace and prosperity of the world.

(2) The Seven Priority Areas of Japan's Foreign Policy

In order to protect and promote Japan's national interests, Japan will pursue diplomacy with a focus on: (1) strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy and security; (2) promoting a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"; (3) diplomacy with neighboring countries, such as China, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and Russia; (4) tackling outstanding issues of concern regarding North Korea; (5) addressing the situation in the Middle East; (6) leading international efforts to create new rules; and (7) addressing global challenges.

[1 Strengthening the Japan-U.S. Alliance, the Cornerstone of Japan's Diplomacy and Security]

The Japan-U.S. Alliance is the cornerstone of Japan's diplomacy and security and plays a significant role in regional and international peace and prosperity. As the security environment surrounding Japan is becoming increasingly severe and uncertain, the Japan-U.S. Alliance is more important than ever.

With the Biden administration, which was inaugurated in January 2021, Japan will further strengthen the Japan-U.S. Alliance and will work closely to realize FOIP as well as resolve regional and international issues, including measures against COVID-19, climate change and North Korea.

With regard to the realignment of U.S. Forces in Japan, including the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Futenma to Henoko and the relocation of the Marine Corps from Okinawa to Guam and other locations outside of Japan, Japan and the U.S. will continue to coordinate closely to mitigate the impact on local communities including Okinawa, while maintaining the deterrence of U.S. Forces in Japan.

[2 Promoting the vision of "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)"]

The Indo-Pacific region is the core of the world's vitality and supports more than half of the world's population, but is also a region which has seen complex power dynamics of countries and has experienced drastic shifts in the regional power balance. It is essential to ensure peace and prosperity in the entire region and beyond, through establishing a free and open order based on the rule of law.

From this perspective, Japan has been strategically promoting efforts to realize FOIP based on the rule of law, in cooperation with like-minded countries. This vision is now shared by the U.S., Australia, India, ASEAN and major countries in Europe, and is gaining broad support in the international community, with various consultations and cooperation under way. The significance and importance of this vision are further increasing in the transition to the post-COVID-19 era. Japan will seize opportunities for various bilateral and multilateral dialogues, including the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. dialogue, to expand the cooperation to more countries.

[3 Diplomacy with Neighboring Countries, such as China, the Republic of Korea, and Russia]

Building stable relations with neighboring countries is critical in ensuring peace and prosperity in Japan.

(China)

The relations with China, a neighboring country across the East China Sea, is one of Japan's most important bilateral relations. Stable Japan-China relations is vital for peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the international community. The relations will be further strengthened if the two countries jointly address and contribute to regional and international challenges as responsible major countries. Japan and China will continue to maintain close high-level communications, including between the leaders, to build stable bilateral relations.

At the same time, there are various outstanding issues of concern with China, and it is important that Japan continues to firmly maintain its position by taking the opportunities of high-level contacts, such as meetings between the leaders and foreign ministers, all the while strongly requesting China's concrete actions. The ongoing and strengthening attempts by China to unilaterally change the status quo in the East China Sea by force or coercion are absolutely unacceptable. With the determination to defend its territory as well as territorial sea and airspace, Japan will continue to take a calm and resolute approach to the situation while strengthening coordination with the relevant countries.

(Republic of Korea)

The Republic of Korea (ROK) is an important neighboring country, and Japan-ROK and Japan-U.S.-ROK coordination, including in dealing with North Korea, is indispensable for the stability of the region. However, the situation in 2020 and beyond has remained unacceptable to Japan due to issues, including the issue of former civilian workers from the Korean Peninsula (hereinafter referred to as "CWKs") and the issue of comfort women. In particular, the confirmation of the judgment of the Seoul Central District Court of the ROK in the lawsuit filed by former comfort women and others in 2021 is absolutely unacceptable, as it is clearly contrary to the international law and agreements between the two countries. Based on Japan's principled positions on issues between our two countries, the Government of Japan will continue to strongly urge the ROK to take appropriate actions, including remedying the status of its breaches of international law.

(Russia)

Amidst the significant changes in the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific, the building of stable relations with Russia contributes not only to Japan's national interests but is also extremely important for regional stability and development.

There is no change to Japan's intention to place importance on its relations with Russia. On the other hand, the Northern Territories issue, which is the greatest concern between Japan and Russia, is yet to be resolved even after more than 75 years have passed since the end of World War II. Under the strong leadership of the Japanese and Russian leaders, the Government of Japan will continue to persistently negotiate with Russia to conclude a peace treaty by resolving the issue of attribution of the Four Northern Islands.

[4 Addressing Outstanding Issues of Concern regarding North Korea]

The Government of Japan has been taking various initiatives to realize its basic policy of seeking to normalize its relations with North Korea through comprehensively resolving outstanding issues of concern, such as the abductions, nuclear and missile issues, as well as settlement of the unfortunate past in accordance with the Japan-DPRK Pyongyang Declaration of 2002. Japan will continue to fully implement relevant UNSC resolutions and aim for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, coordinating closely with the U.S. and the ROK, and cooperating with the international community, including China and Russia.

As well as being a critical issue concerning the sovereignty of Japan and the lives and safety of Japanese citizens, abductions by North Korea constitute a universal issue for the international community as a violation of basic human rights. Japan has positioned the resolution of the abductions issue as the most important issue and will continue to make utmost efforts to realize the return home of all abductees at the earliest possible date while working closely with relevant countries, including the U.S.

[5 Addressing the Situation in the Middle East]

Japan imports approximately 90% of its crude oil from the Middle East, and it is extremely important for Japan's peace and prosperity to promote peace and stability in the Middle East and to

maintain and develop good relations with countries in the region. From this point of view, Japan recently has been striving to strengthen its relations with Middle Eastern countries in a wide range of fields that include not only the economy but also politics and security as well as cultural and people-to-people exchanges. Tensions in the Middle East remain high in recent years. In response to the situation, Japan will continue to make active efforts to ease tensions and stabilize the situation in the region. To ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels, Japan has been conducting information gathering activities by Self-Defense Force vessels and aircraft in Middle Eastern waters since 2020 and will make ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of Japan-related vessels in the region.

[6 Leading International Efforts to Create New Rules]

The world economy faces challenges, such as the rise of protectionism and trade disputes, as well as the stagnation of economic activities, plummeting demand, and restrictions on movement of people due to COVID-19. Under such circumstances, Japan has continued its trade liberalization and rule-making efforts through economic partnerships, signing the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Agreement in November 2020 and the entry into force of the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Japan-UK CEPA) in January 2021. In order to expand the free and fair economic order that will serve as the basis for Japan's peace and prosperity in Japan, Japan will continue to make proactive efforts to ensure the early entry into force and full implementation of the RCEP Agreement, steady implementation and expansion of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP11 Agreement) as the chair of the TPP Commission in 2021, and negotiation of other economic partnership agreements.

In addition, in the field of digital technology that will gain importance in the post-COVID-19 world,

Japan will globally promote the "Osaka Track," launched on the margin of the G20 Osaka Summit under Japan's presidency, and lead the efforts to develop common rules on data flow. Japan has focused on building international rules in new areas including new domains such as cyberspace and outer space as well as maintaining national security in our economy and technology which has broadened its scope due to technological innovations, through activities at the UN and other fora. This effort is based on the understanding that existing international law applies to these new areas. Furthermore, Japan will continue to exercise international leadership in disseminating and implementing the principles and visions put forward by Japan at the G20 Osaka Summit, including the "G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment" and the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision."

[7 Addressing Global Challenges]

One country alone cannot address global challenges, such as peacebuilding, terrorism, disarmament and non-proliferation, the rule of law, human rights, women's empowerment and gender equality, disaster risk reduction, global health, and the environment and climate change, and the international community needs to mount a united response. Japan will continue to advance international contributions under the concept of human security in order to ensure that freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law are respected as universal values in the international community, to take good care of socially vulnerable people, and to realize a society where individuals can make the most use of their potential. Japan will also accelerate concrete initiatives domestically and internationally in order to lead the global effort for achieving the SDGs.

(Global Health)

Health is critically essential for the embodiment of human security, which is a concept of protecting individuals and unleashing their potential. In order to promote Universal Health Coverage

(UHC) with the spirit of “leaving no one’s health behind,” Japan has made significant achievements in infectious disease control, maternal and child health and nutrition, in cooperation with other countries and international organizations. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Japan has offered health and medical services to developing countries for coping with COVID-19, as well as necessary support for building quality, resilient and inclusive medical and health systems from a mid- to long-term perspective, including support for establishing the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases. In 2021, Japan will host the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit 2021 and promote global efforts toward nutrition improvement.

(Climate Change)

Addressing climate change is increasing in importance, also in the context of the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. At the 24th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24) in 2018, the implementation guidelines of the Paris Agreement were adopted. Regarding negotiations on the implementation guidelines for market mechanisms, however, an agreement was not reached even at COP25 in 2019, and the guidelines are still under review. Japan will continue to lead the international community in the lead-up to COP26 in 2021 in order to realize a decarbonized world, which the Paris Agreement aims for.

(Proactive Initiatives for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation)

As the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in war, Japan has the responsibility to lead the international efforts to realize a world free of nuclear weapons. Japan continues to pursue bridge building between nuclear-weapon states and non-nuclear-weapon states through such actions and frameworks as submission of the resolution on nuclear disarmament to the

UN General Assembly, the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) and the Group of Eminent Persons for Substantive Advancement of Nuclear Disarmament, and has carried out realistic and practical measures that also involve nuclear-weapon states.

In addition, Japan puts effort into non-proliferation policies, including through maintaining and strengthening international non-proliferation regimes and rules, appropriately implementing non-proliferation measures in Japan, as well as closely coordinating with other countries and providing capacity building assistance. Japan places importance on maintaining and strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and will make active contributions to international discussions to achieve a meaningful outcome at the NPT Review Conference expected to be held in August 2021.

(Strengthening Cooperation with the UN and International Organizations / UN Security Council Reform)

Japan has played a key role in maintaining international peace and security, making contributions through UN Peace Keeping Operations (PKOs) and serving as a non-permanent member of the UNSC 11 times, the most among the UN Member States. Now, with 75 years having passed since the UN was established, it is an urgent issue to make the body more efficient and effective, and suitable for the 21st century. Japan will continue to make efforts in pursuit of the early realization of UNSC reform and Japan’s admission as a permanent member. Furthermore, in order to continue to contribute to the order of peace and security in the international community prior to its admission as a permanent member, Japan is seeking to be elected in the UNSC non-permanent membership election in 2022.

In addition, Japan has been making policy contributions, assessed and voluntary financial

contributions, as well as personnel contributions in a broad sense for the UN and other international organizations to tackle a variety of issues. Japan will make efforts to encourage the employment of more Japanese staff and their appointment to executive posts at international organizations.

(Africa)

While Africa has made remarkable growth in recent years, it has also faced many challenges. Japan has been contributing to African development through the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), the pioneering

forum of its kind, launched by Japan in 1993. Japan's initiatives through the TICAD process that support African health and medical systems in the mid- to long-term have shown concrete results in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. As COVID-19 sheds light on Africa's development issues, including those in the health sector, and looking ahead to TICAD8 to be held in Tunisia in 2022, Japan will continue to strengthen its relations with Africa and to resolutely support African-led development through initiatives that leverage Japan's advantages and its unique characteristics.

Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting

The four countries of Japan, Australia, India and the U.S. share basic values. Moreover, as responsible partners of the region, they share the common goal of reinforcing a free and open international order based on rules. The "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" vision plays an important role toward the achievement of this goal. To that end, the four countries have been engaging in a wide range of discussions aimed at advancing concrete cooperation on common issues, including quality infrastructure, maritime security and counter-terrorism.

Against this backdrop, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia Marise Payne, External Affairs Minister of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Secretary of State of the U.S. Mike Pompeo convened on October 6 in the Iikura Guest House in Tokyo, where Mr. Motegi, Minister for Foreign Affairs chaired the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting and dinner. This is the second meeting of the four foreign ministers after the inaugural meeting held in New York in September 2019, on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly. This was the first meeting held independently and separately from an international conference or other event. Furthermore, as this was also the first international ministerial-level conference to take place in Japan since the outbreak and spread of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), it was held with the necessary measures in place to prevent the spread of infections.

At the meeting, the four Ministers exchanged views on the response to various challenges that have come to the fore with the outbreak and spread of COVID-19, and affirmed their intention to continue their cooperation in the areas of health and hygiene and on issues including making new international rules in such areas as digital economy. They affirmed the importance of broadening cooperation with more countries for the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," as the vision serves for the peace and prosperity of the region and its importance in the post-COVID-19 world is increasing. They also exchanged views on regional affairs such as North Korea and the East and South China Seas. They then shared the view to regularize this Foreign Ministers' meeting and hold the next one at an appropriate timing next year.

With the global spread of COVID-19, the existing international order is facing challenges in various fields. In light of that, it was timely for the foreign ministers of four countries that share a common purpose to take time and exchange honest views about their recognition of the current situation and response measures for the future.

Japan, Australia, India and the U.S. will continue to steadily advance various forms of cooperation as close partners, in order to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific and secure the stability and prosperity of the region.



The four foreign ministers attending the Second Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (October 6, Tokyo)



The foreign ministers of Australia, India and the U.S. paying a courtesy call to Prime Minister Suga before the meeting (October 6, Tokyo; Photo: Cabinet Public Relations Office)



At the Japan-Australia-India-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting (October 6, Tokyo)