Preface to the Diplomatic Bluebook 2023

The world is now at a turning point in history. A free and open international order based on the rule of law, which supported peace and prosperity in the post-Cold War era, is facing serious challenges due to historical changes in the balance of power and intensifying geopolitical competition. Unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force are not limited to Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, which has shaken the very foundation of the international order. Such attempts also continue in the periphery of Japan. Moreover, economic security issues, such as vulnerability of supply chains, economic coercion, and intellectual property theft, as well as exploitation of emerging technologies, such as cyberattacks and the spread of disinformation, are posing challenges to global peace and stability.

Meanwhile, global issues such as climate change and infectious disease crises are occurring simultaneously, requiring cross-border cooperation among nations. Today, we are in an era where confrontation and cooperation are intricately intertwined in international relations. In the 20th century, distrust of multilateralism and economic blocs based on self-centered mentalities led to the last world war. We must not forget this lesson learned from the failure of humanity. This is the time for the international community to overcome inter-state rivalries and conflicts of interests, address common challenges through dialogue and cooperation, and strive to maintain and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law.

To lead these efforts, I will continue to develop Japanese diplomacy with the following three forms of determination at the heart and by maintaining a balanced and stable posture with a high level of responsiveness: (1) the determination to fully defend universal values; (2) the determination to fully defend the peace and security of Japan; and (3) the determination to lead the international community by addressing global issues.

The Diplomatic Bluebook 2023 primarily presents an overview of the international situation and Japan’s diplomatic activities in 2022. The opening pages outline the major events of the past year in chronological order as a way to reflect on the developments in the world. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the recent international situation, the major issues that emerged in the past year, and the corresponding outlook for Japan’s diplomacy. Following this summary of the Diplomatic Bluebook, Chapter 2 and the following Chapters describe Japan’s diplomatic efforts over the past year under the titles of: Japan’s Foreign Policy by Region, Japan’s Foreign Policy to Promote National and Global Interests, and Japan’s Diplomacy Open to the Public. Furthermore, Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, an event that symbolizes the end of the post-Cold War era, is discussed in a “Special Feature” with a focus on Japan’s responses.

I hope this Diplomatic Bluebook will deepen the understanding of readers at home and abroad about how Japan carries out diplomacy by exercising leadership on issues facing the international community, which is now at a turning point.

Minister for Foreign Affairs
HAYASHI Yoshimasa
In principle, Diplomatic Bluebook 2023 describes an overview of the international affairs and Japan's diplomatic activities from January 1 to December 31 of 2022; however, some important events that occurred until early 2023 are also included.

 Chapters 1 to 4 offer overviews of Japan's diplomatic activities throughout 2022 in a concise and easy-to-understand manner, and also include special features delving into specific foreign policy themes and column articles including contributions from people with global experiences.

 This year’s and past years’ Diplomatic Bluebooks are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). Summaries of Diplomatic Bluebook 2023 in French and Spanish are also due to be available on the website by autumn 2023.

 For more details with respect to Chapter 3, Section 1, “4 Disarmament and Non-proliferation and the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy,” and Section 2, “Japan’s International Cooperation,” please refer to MOFA’s publications, Japan’s Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy, and White Paper on Development Cooperation - Japan’s International Cooperation. They are also available on the MOFA website.

 Please note that the titles of persons and names of countries appearing in this book are those as of the events. Website links and QR codes in this book are those as of publication and may be changed or deleted later. The contents and views expressed in contributions from individuals and organizations do not reflect the position of MOFA. The maps in this book are simplified and may not necessarily be drawn to scale or reflect other details precisely.

 Previous Diplomatic Bluebooks:

 Japan’s Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Policy
 (only in the Japanese language):
 https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/gun_hakusho/index.html

 White Paper on Development Cooperation - Japan’s International Cooperation: