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Prime Minister Noda and Foreign Minister Gemba Attend the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly: Towards a Brighter Future

The 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly was held on September 20-23 in New York, and Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and Minister for Foreign Affairs Koichiro Gemba attended as representatives of the Government of Japan. During his stay in New York, Prime Minister Noda gave his address to the UN General Assembly, and attended and gave a speech at the United Nations High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security. At a reception hosted by the prime minister and his wife, he expressed his gratitude for the support Japan received from the international community following the Great East Japan Earthquake and his determination that Japan would recover. Prime Minister Noda also held meetings with U.S. President Barack Obama, President of South Korea Lee Myung-bak, Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon, President of the European Council Herman Achille Van Rompuy, European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, Prime Minister of England David Cameron, President of the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser, and Prime Minister of India Manmohan Singh.

Foreign Minister Gemba served as a co-chair of the Interactive Session of the United Nations High-level Meeting on Nuclear Safety and Security and led discussions as the co-chair of the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative and at the Ministerial-level side event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Foreign Minister Gemba also participated in several other meetings including one on conditions in the Middle East and Africa and the Ministerial Meeting of the G4 countries on UN Security Council reform. In addition to holding meetings with the foreign ministers or equivalent of the U.S., Pakistan, Egypt, Russia, Indonesia, China, England, Libya, and South Korea,

Foreign Minister Gamba held talks with the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Helen Clark and strategic talks with Gulf Cooperation Council. Furthermore, Foreign Minister Gamba invited various people including ministers of several African countries to a reception where he exchanged opinions with the representatives of numerous countries.

1 Prime Minister Noda's address to the General Assembly

In his address to the UN General Assembly on the topic of a role in intermediating resolutions to conflicts started on September 21, Prime Minister Noda expressed (a) his determination that Japan would recover from the Great East Japan Earthquake and move forward step by step towards a peaceful, prosperous, and brighter future, (b) his determination to contribute to global economic growth and Japan's economic recovery, nuclear safety, various global issues, and international efforts in several fields such as reforms at the United Nations, and (c) three new commitments. The following is a summary of his address.

(1) Introduction

The People of Japan expressed their gratitude for the friendship and solidarity shown throughout the world after the Great East Japan Earthquake. Japan is giving the greatest priority to recovery and reconstruction efforts and working to revitalize Japan as rapidly as possible. Regarding the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant, Japan is making the utmost efforts to move work forward and complete efforts quicker than planned.

(2) Global economic growth and revitalization of the Japanese economy

While stressing development of the middle class, Japan will continue to support developing countries through programs such as ODA. Japan is striving to both improve its financial position and boost economic growth. Japan will work to strengthen the economic partnership between Japan and the rest of the world. In addition, Japan is developing a strategy to promote a green economy and to make a bold shift in energy by the summer of 2012 in order to achieve sustainable growth.

(3) Disaster prevention and nuclear safety

In addition to hosting an international conference on disaster prevention next year in the Tohoku region, which was hit by the Great East Japan Earthquake, Japan proposes to host the Third World Conference on Disaster Reduction in 2015 and will play a leading role in international society. Turning to nuclear safety, Japan will improve emergency safety measures and further strengthen its regulatory system, make use of the lessons learned from the accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant, and contribute to the reinforcement of global nuclear power safety. Japan will also hold an international conference in cooperation with the

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) next year and share with the international community the results of its comprehensive inspection following the accident.

(4) Response to various global problems

Japan will work for a resolution to the problem of piracy off the coast of Somalia and continue to provide support to Afghanistan in order to eradicate terrorism. Japan will also strive to foster peace by actively participating in UN peace keeping operations. The country will do all it can to realize a world without nuclear weapons. In addition to urging North Korea to take concrete steps to resolve its nuclear and missile issues, Japan will exert all efforts to find a solution to the abduction of Japanese nationals by North Korea, a universal issue of human rights, and realize their return to Japan as quickly as possible.

(5) United Nations reforms

Japan supports efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the UN and thinks that reforming the Security Council is indispensable for strengthening the UN. Japan intends to launch substantive negotiations towards the reform, to make tangible achievements during this session of the UN General Assembly.

(6) Three new commitments

First, Japan extends support for the nation-building efforts in South Sudan, as well as for the consolidation of peace in the region. Japan is preparing to dispatch Japanese Self-Defense Forces personnel as staff officers to the Headquarters of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS). Japan is also interested in dispatching an engineering unit of our Self-Defense Forces, and therefore will conduct the necessary field study as early as possible.

Second, in addition to the approximately 100 million dollars in aid already provided to respond to the drought that is directly impacting children in the Horn of Africa, Japan will provide further humanitarian aid.

Third, Japan will support reform and democratization efforts in the Middle East and North Africa and provide an additional yen loan worth approximately 1.0 billion dollars to projects investing in infrastructure and industry development. Support will also be provided for elections in Tunisia and Egypt and country building in the newly created Libya, and efforts will be made to promote trade and investment. Japan will also work to support peace in the Middle East, including Palestinians' efforts to realize the two-state solution.

2 Third Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative: Moving towards a world with low nuclear risk

On September 21, the Third Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative (NPDI) was held at the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations. Spearheaded by Japan and Australia, the NPDI, a group of diverse

countries throughout the world interested in non-proliferation and disarmament, was launched in September of last year at the meeting of the UN General Assembly. This ministerial meeting followed the second one held in Berlin in April 2011 and was sponsored and co-chaired by Japan and Australia. The meeting was held to review achievements during the one year since the group was formed and to discuss the direction of future efforts.

At the beginning of the meeting, Minister for Foreign Affairs Gamba noted that achievements have steadily been made, and these include proposing a draft standard nuclear disarmament reporting form for nuclear arms reductions in order to (a) work out a realistic plan to fulfill the group's role as a bridge between countries that possess nuclear weapons and those that do not and (b) play a leading role in the medium- and long-term international debate to create a world with low nuclear risk. In addition, Foreign Minister Gamba stated that the NPDII has grown into an entity that draws the attention of the international community because of the lively debate among participating countries at the last two ministerial meetings. In the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, there are numerous issues that still must be resolved including the immediate commencement of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), and Foreign Minister Gamba emphasized the importance of adopting a stance that gives greater stress to action as the First Session of the NPT Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference approaches.

Foreign ministers from six of the ten participating countries attended the meeting as the presence of the initiative has grown in the international community. It was extremely significant that there were actual full discussions on the draft standard nuclear disarmament reporting form and the immediate commencement of FMCT negotiations, an issue important to Japan. Having played a role in moving debate forward regarding not only the selection of the host country and facilitator for the International Conference on the establishment of Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction, which was agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and will be held in 2012, but also the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach that will involve all related parties, Turkey is expected to host the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative in the spring of next year, which was extremely significant. In addition, unanimous agreement was reached on the following content for the joint statement: (a) greater transparency in nuclear arms reductions, including providing the five nuclear armed countries with the reporting form for nuclear arms reductions; (b) support for the resolution that Canada wants to submit to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in order to break through the stalemate at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) on commencement of FMCT negotiations; (c) sharing experiences in making IAEA additional protocols universal; (d) practical

proposals to strengthen export controls; (e) support for efforts to strengthen the global non-proliferation system and to promote the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a method to contribute to arms reductions; (f) energetically promoting non-proliferation and arms reduction education; and (g) maintaining an awareness of the benefits to citizens of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) verification system and commitment to promote the ratification of the treaty.

3 G8 Foreign Ministers Meeting (ministerial follow-up meeting on the Deauville Partnership): Announcing the enhancement of support for the efforts of countries in the Middle East and North Africa, economic exchanges, and people-to-people exchanges

On September 20, foreign ministers met to follow up on the G8 Deauville Summit held in May 2011. At the meeting, representatives of not only the G8 countries but also the Middle East and North Africa, and relevant international organizations discussed the Deauville Partnership to support the historic changes occurring in the Middle East and North Africa. Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and Libya, which have benefited from this partnership, explained the numerous challenges they face and their efforts to reform their economies and societies and expressed their hope for support from the international community. In response, participants discussed the matter and agreed that related countries and organizations would join forces to improve governance-related issues such as the rule of law and formation of civil society on the political side and to promote regional integration.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Gemba pointed out that it was important for the international community, including the G8, to trust the desire and self-help efforts of countries in the Middle East and North Africa towards transition and reform, and to fully support these efforts. In addition, Foreign Minister Gemba expressed support for the self-help efforts of countries in the Middle East and North Africa through establishment of fair political process and government, human resource development that aides economic recovery and stability of each country, and job creation and industrial development and to make the utmost efforts to enhance economic exchanges, including through the Japan-Arab Economic Forum as well as people-to-people exchanges such as the Future Dialogue.

At the end of the meeting, the Deauville Partnership Foreign Ministers issued a Communiqué.

4 Ministerial-level side event on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): Leadership in international efforts to achieve MDGs

Under the leadership of Japan, a Ministerial-level Meeting on the MDGs was

held as a side event of the General Assembly on September 21, and around 400 people from governments, international organizations, the private sector, and NGOs from all over the world attended. Following the opening remarks, Foreign Minister Gemba gave a speech on the outcomes of the MDGs Follow-up Meeting held in Tokyo in June 2011, sharing information on several developments such as the discussions based on EMBRACE (Ensure Mothers and Babies Regular Access to Care) and School for All, Japan's support models in the fields of health and education, as well as the launch of discussions on the international development agenda beyond 2015 (Post-MDGs). Foreign Minister Gemba also presented Japan's efforts to achieve the MDGs, including the highly innovative partnership between Japan and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to fight polio in Pakistan. During the following panel discussion, which was moderated by Miss Helen Clark, the Administrator of the UNDP, representatives from various countries including Dr. Dipu Moni, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh, Mr. Anthony Lake, the Executive Director of UNICEF, Ms. Tamar Manuelyan Atinc, the Vice President of the World Bank, and representatives of the private sector (the Gates Foundation) and NGOs (Save the Children) expressed their determination to accelerate their efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015, and called for cooperation among the various development partners. We had fruitful discussions regarding how to accelerate our efforts on the MDGs and the international development agenda beyond 2015.

The meeting was highly successful in maintaining and strengthening political momentum for the achievement of the MDGs. Also, Japan showed its strong leadership in the activities and discussions related to the MDGs while emphasizing human security and equity, which was highly appreciated by various participants. Moreover, it was highlighted that various challenges dependent on the individual contexts of regions and the levels of economic development should be addressed. We also had stimulating discussions on Post-MDGs as well as how to accelerate our future efforts. The meeting provided an opportunity to strengthen partnerships among the various development actors and to encourage discussions on the MDGs among various international fora.

For details:

- Minister for Foreign Affairs Koichiro Gemba Attends the 66th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Minister's movie on the MOFA homepage)
http://www.mofa.go.jp/about/hq/fm_corner/index.html (will be uploaded soon)
- MDGs Follow-up Meeting (June 2-3, Tokyo)
http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2011/6/0603_01.html
- New Health and Education Policies
http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/mdg/hm_65unga.html

For more information on Japan

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan <http://www.mofa.go.jp>

Embassy of Japan in Rwanda <http://www.rw.emb-japan.go.jp>

Japan Echo Web <http://www.japanechowebsite.jp/>

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