

(Provisional translation)

1. Thank you for the introduction. I'm Gen Nakatani. I am in charge of international human rights issues as Special Advisor to the Prime Minister, which was established for the first time in the Kishida Cabinet last November.

2. I have served twice as Minister of Defense. National security is my life's work and I have been receiving advice from Dr. Hosoya and other experts here on a regular basis.

Before appointed as special advisor for human rights issues, I was the Chairman of the Nonpartisan Parliamentary Association for Human Rights Diplomacy.

The reason why I have been working on this issue is because I believe that securing international human rights is fundamental norm for all countries to establish an international order which the security should achieve.

In order to make Japan and the world peaceful and prosperous, it is fundamental to cooperate with the countries including the United States, Europe, and Australia, with which we share universal values such as freedom and democracy, as well as those including the Asian countries, which are making efforts for democratization by overcoming various political and economic challenges towards future prosperity.

3. Currently, the international order is in imminent danger. On February 24, Russia launched a military aggression on Ukraine. On March 2, I attended the high-level segment of the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva and strongly urged Russia to "fulfil its obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law."

To this day, an array of the brutal and inhumane acts by Russia have been revealed in various regions in Ukraine. Russia has repeatedly committed serious violation of international humanitarian law, such as the killing of innocent civilians, which is unacceptable war crimes. The international order, which has been underpinned by respect for human rights and the rule of law, is brought to a crisis right at this moment. Since the end of World War II, Japan has built a free and democratic country, consistently following the path

of a peace-loving nation. We have been working hard to maintain and strengthen the international order through respect for human rights and the rule of law, and with regard to Russia, we have taken strict actions.

4 . In the past, at the Paris Peace Conference which decided the international regime after World War I, Japan submitted a proposal to eliminate racial discrimination. More than 100 years ago, the Japanese government already advocated that discrimination is the cause of conflict and that respect for human rights is essential for permanent peace. At that time, Japan had serious discrimination problems domestically. Nevertheless it appealed for racial equality in the international arena. The proposal was rejected; however, it was redeemed epoch-making and advanced proposal that could contribute to the development of universal human rights principles in the world at that time. I understand that this was also echoed by the Asian people who were under colonial rule at that time. It was sincerely regrettable that after this principle of racial equality was rejected, the distrust of the West was further grown in Japan, and the logic of force was used to promote a change in the status quo in Asian region.

5 . After the Pacific War, Japan, which achieved peace and prosperity based on democracy, has focused on the high economic growth during the Cold War and promoting trade and commerce for supporting it. For Asian countries, we have been providing development assistance, stating that, "Stability and prosperity through economic growth are the foundation of democracy."

6 . Thereafter, as globalization and digitalization advance in the 21st century, protecting human rights has been more and more crucial than ever. Human rights, which is the norm of the international order, are universal. Therefore, we consider international standards as our own measure, respect human rights regularly in our everyday life. If innocent civilians are subjected to human rights violations, the citizens of not only the country concerned but also of the world will join in solidarity and attempt to involve

the United Nations and the democratic countries in resolving the situation as a challenge to the international order.

Japan has been working to support governance areas including support for development of legal and judicial systems and strengthening media journalism, and to support vulnerable people such as women, children, and people with disabilities, in order to improve the human rights situation of people living in developing regions.

For example, Japan not only takes measures to establish a democratic system such as legal system development, election assistance, and training of legal experts, but also conducts human rights dialogues and drafts and submits resolutions on the situation of human rights in Cambodia at the UN Human Rights Council. Japan has persistently involved in the work to respect human rights in Cambodia while standing between the two sides and listening to both views from Western countries and NGOs and the Government of Cambodia.

In the event of Russia's aggression against Ukraine, we have implemented strong sanctions in cooperation with the G7 and other countries and accepted about 2000 Ukrainian evacuees. Japan is determined to keep pace with the international community so that respect for fundamental human rights will take root globally in every country and region, utilizing our past good practices.

7. Universal values such as human rights, freedoms, democracy, and the rule of law should be respected in any country. Protecting human rights is the fundamental responsibility for every country. On the other hand, however, improving the human rights situation cannot be accomplished overnight.

While Japan has firmly raised its voice against serious human rights violations, it has also supported the voluntary efforts of individual countries by respecting the historical background and individual circumstances of each country, listening to the other side's views through bilateral dialogue, and accumulating such cooperation.

I think respecting their different history and culture while sharing universal values, as if each different thread were woven together, is unique approach of Japan's human rights diplomacy. We say strong words on serious human rights violations, and sometimes we will not hesitate tough action. However, we will not close the channel. I have the view that providing support for

voluntary solutions in the country concerned, working side by side and collaborating with various stakeholders, including NGOs, will lead to a true resolution of human rights issues. I believe that this collaborative approach will help countries that are making efforts to resolve domestic human rights issues to ease the sense of caution which they have toward developed countries.

8 . This unique collaborative approach is also taken in the area of “business and human rights”. Human rights should be respected not only by states but also by companies. The "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights" that was endorsed at the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2011 is a fundamental international document. Currently, investors and consumers now give severe assessment to companies that do not respect human rights. Human rights are urgent issues for companies to address.

While the U.S., Europe, and other countries have already introduced laws and regulations aimed at eliminating forced labor in the supply chains, the Japanese Government promotes voluntary efforts by companies through non-legally binding guidelines, as well as international cooperation.

The Japanese guidelines formulated this September encourage companies, as responsible actors, to respect human rights, assess and address risks of human rights violations in their supply chains, engage in dialogue with various stakeholders, and publicly disclose these efforts. The goal of these guidelines is to help companies with multi-layered supply chains, especially in Asia, to protect human rights in the region through improving the quality of their own supply chains, which in turn will contribute to the stability of the international order in the Asian region and beyond. When I went on a business trip to Vietnam and Thailand last month, I disseminated these Japanese initiatives and thoughts, and received a high level of expectation and interest.

9 . To materialize the universal values of human rights, we collaborate with countries of different histories and cultures so that they take voluntary approach. Furthermore, we embrace more diverse range of stakeholders to achieve it. I believe that this collaboration is the very foundation of Japan's unique human rights diplomacy and the reason why Japan should be a

leading player in human rights diplomacy in this divided world. Next year, Japan will hold the presidency of the G7 and host the G7 Summit in Hiroshima next May. Taking advantage of these opportunities, we would like to discuss concrete cooperation to respect human rights and to maintain and strengthen the international order.

1 0 . The themes of today's event, Europe and Japan, are partners to address common international issues based on fundamental values such as human rights, democracy, and market economy. Going back to history, it was our ancestors during the Meiji Restoration who brought modern human rights ideas from Europe to Japan through 'Tenpu-jinken-ron' (the theory of the human rights given by the heaven) and 'Jiyu Minken Undo' (political movement of citizens for liberty and human rights).

Currently, in the field of new and emerging human rights issues, for example, in the area of digital and human rights, the EU and Japan have cooperated on international rule-making. While cooperating with the EU in norm-making, I hope the G7 to take international cooperation one step further in the field of human rights through our unique approach, and to pave the way to bring the world from division to mutual cooperation.

1 1 . I think Japan's role in human rights diplomacy is like a shuttle used in textile wearing. A shuttle is a tool used to thread the weft while the warp is open. The shuttle is an indispensable tool for threading the warp threads with different beauty, back and forth, through the weft threads to create a single piece of fabric, layer by layer. And it's made of sturdy wood.

Japan is ready to play an indispensable role in combining countries which have different history and cultures, with strong will, step by step and bringing beautiful harmony in the international order based on rules. I will do my best as Japan's first special advisor on international human rights issues.

1 2 . I would like to offer my best wishes to all attendees, and hope that discussion in this event will inspire you and bring you further success in each field.