

Statement by H.E. Mr. Kenzo Oshima

Permanent Representative of Japan

**At the Informal Meeting of the Plenary on the High-Level Plenary Meeting
of the General Assembly of September 2005**

21 June 2005

Mr. President,

I would like to begin by expressing our great appreciation to you and your facilitators for the excellent work done in preparing the first draft of the document for the September summit.

Let me at the outset reiterate Japan's full commitment to strengthening the United Nations in order to make it more effective and efficient in addressing the common, fundamental issues facing the world today, and to reforming our Organization so that it better reflects the realities of the contemporary world, sixty years after its inception. We look forward to the September summit as a unique opportunity to rise to our challenges, particularly in addressing the inter-connected issues of development, peace and security, and human rights. We would like to see the necessary political will fully mobilized to enable us to reach important decisions that the international community expects of the United Nations.

The proposed draft, in our view, has given broad consideration to the Secretary-General's report, to the member states' views expressed during consultations in cluster group meetings, and to other useful input made by some of them during the past several months. As a consequence, my delegation can take the draft generally as well-balanced and reflective of different views and positions, and we welcome it as a good basis for further discussion on the September outcome document.

Development

Mr. President,

As a country with a particular interest in and commitment to development issues, Japan attaches special importance to the successful handling of these issues. Japan will cooperate fully with efforts to achieve the development goals that are internationally agreed upon, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We support the emphasis placed in the draft on developing countries' ownership for development. The central importance of this clear but often not fully appreciated recognition cannot be overemphasized. As partners, developed countries must offer assistance to developing countries in their efforts to help themselves; in other words we must help them strengthen their ownership in making decisions concerning their own development.

In order to contribute to the MDGs, Japan will continue its efforts toward the goal of providing ODA equal to 0.7 percent of our GNI. From this point of view, Japan will ensure a credible and sufficient level of ODA and strive to realize a strategic expansion of its ODA volume. Japan will also strengthen its efforts to provide multilateral debt relief for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)s, in keeping with the conclusion on development at the recent G8 finance ministers' meeting.

In this regard, my delegation would like to stress the importance of private sector investment, especially foreign direct investment, as resources for development. We support domestic and international initiatives to improve on investment climate in developing countries.

On the issue of innovative resources of financing for development, countries should make its efforts to consider to strengthen initiatives within its capacity based on its own institutional system and circumstances.

Trade is the engine of development. Japan's imports from developing countries as a portion of total imports, is among the highest of OECD member countries. As a country which recognizes the importance of agriculture in development, Japan is widening the window of opportunity for development through such measures as a substantial reduction of agricultural subsidies and helping to build productive capacities in developing countries. Through these measures, we are striving to achieve an early completion of the Doha round of multilateral trade negotiations.

We fully support the emphasis laid on the special needs of Africa in the overall strategy of the MDGs. Japan has made a great contribution to raising awareness of the challenges facing Africa through the process of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development(TICAD). Japan will hold TICAD IV in 2008. Recognizing this essential objective, the Government of Japan has announced that it will double its ODA to Africa in the next three years to come. We will carry out our debt relief program and provide support for NEPAD. Japan's support for Africa also embraces peacebuilding initiatives, agriculture and rural development and the promotion of trade and investment. We will enhance private sector development and capacity building through such measures as a new loan facility and new trust fund in cooperation with the AfDB.

My delegation also welcomes that the draft clearly recognizes the special needs of the LDCs, Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). We expect that the outcome document will pay sufficient attention to the legitimate concerns and aspirations of these countries.

One issue on development that is missing in the draft document is the important role of South-South cooperation. Attention is drawn to the Asian-African Strategic Partnership and a plan of action that was endorsed at the Asian-African summit held in April in Indonesia. The plan of action contains a number of significant proposals pertaining to South-South cooperation, and efforts will be made to implement them in the coming months, thus opening a new vista in this promising area. We request that the outcome document adequately reflect this new development, which will be supported by all Asian and African states.

We welcome the reinforced language on environmental sustainability, including the emphasis on climate change. As a leading donor in the fields of health, education, and water and sanitation, we consider it quite appropriate that the outcome document highlights the special need for assistance in these key areas. One practical example is the “quick win projects”. Japan has pledged to provide ten million long-lasting insecticidal-treated nets by 2007 to fight the spread of malaria in Africa. We support the language on HIV/AIDS and other health-related issues and welcome the reference to such important issues as gender and science and technology. In this connection, the Government of Japan implements a new “Health and Development” Initiative to contribute to the achievement a health MDGs through ODA as expressed on the occasion of the High-Level Forum on Health MDGs in Asia and the Pacific. We also commend the initiative taken by the President to include the items of employment and migration. Japan would also like to reiterate the critical role of education in nation-building, which is not referred to in the document. We strongly hope that the importance of education for development will be appropriately reflected in the outcome document.

Peace and collective security

Mr. President,

On peace and security, the draft you presented captures threats and challenges as all interrelated, and calls on member states to recommit themselves to a system of collective security based on the UN Charter. This is a position that we can endorse.

With regard to the question of the legitimacy of the use of force under Chapter VII of the Charter, we appreciate that the Secretary-General has presented an idea with criteria in five points. However, it seems to us that since member states’ views on this question still vary to a considerable extent, further discussion is appropriate.

We deeply regret that the NPT Review Conference failed to produce any substantive agreement. In order to maintain the credibility of the NPT regime, every state-party should fulfill its obligations and strive to strengthen the regime. It will be in the interest of all states to have progress in both disarmament and non-proliferation areas, and to this end, it is of utmost importance that we reconfirm our commitment at the highest-level to disarmament and non-proliferation.

On terrorism, in order for the international community to pursue the fight against terrorism, Japan considers it is important to clearly state, at the September summit, that the targeting and deliberate killing of civilians and non-combatants cannot be justified or legitimized by any cause or grievance. We must show the determination of all the Member States of the UN to engage in the negotiation of the draft Comprehensive Convention on Terrorism aiming for its conclusion by June 2006. From this viewpoint, we support the current draft outcome Document as it stands.

In fighting the scourge of terrorism, sufficient emphasis will need to be placed on how to deal with its underlying causes. This should be addressed in parallel with counter-terrorism measures against actual threats. For example, Japan has been actively promoting dialogue among civilizations,

which facilitates mutual understanding among people in different background. Political reforms, which will lead to realization of political ends through a peaceful means, and educational reforms, which will enhance tolerance for different views, are also important, and Japan is providing assistance in those areas as well.

Japan supports a declaration at the September summit of the establishment of a Peacebuilding Commission, which will provide a forum for effective, coherent, and coordinated response to all issues related to post-conflict peacebuilding and necessary assistance. The proposed Commission should begin operation by the end of the year, and to that end my delegation will actively participate in discussions to work out the details. Japan also supports the establishment of a standing fund for peacebuilding that will be financed by voluntary contributions.

Human rights and the rule of law

Mr. President,

Real progress in the areas of development and peace and security is difficult to envisage without ensuring respect for human rights. The UN's ability to address human rights issues more effectively and in a fairer manner is a measure of trust that the world community puts in our Organization.

In this context, we support the establishment of a Human Rights Council. We believe the proposal presented in the draft is achievable, and we welcome it. It is desirable that we achieve a realistic solution to the question of the size of the Council, being either comparable to or less than the size of the current Commission on Human Rights. We expect the September summit to reach general agreement on several principles in establishing a Human Rights Council, to be followed by substantive discussions on its working methods and other details during the 60th Session of the General Assembly.

We agree with and support the call for strengthening the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and we welcome the High Commissioner's Plan of Action, which we hope will contribute to national capacity building for human rights.

On the establishment of a Democracy Fund, we support it and have issued a joint letter to the Secretary-General requesting that he establish the Fund expeditiously. It is hoped that the Fund will be used effectively to offer UN assistance for capacity building, based on requests from recipient countries.

There are no fewer than 25 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the world. However, unlike in the case of refugees, no single UN entity holds a mandate to protect and assist IDPs. We need norms and practical guidance to harmonize the sovereign rights of states and the international community's assistance and protection activities, which "the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement" attempts to do. We believe the time has come for member states to recognize the

guiding principle as an appropriate platform in the protection regime of IDPs, and we therefore strongly support the language in the draft as appropriate.

The role played by the International Court of Justice is important in order to enhance the rule of law in the international community. We welcome the draft text referring to the strengthened role of the Court's work.

We welcome enhanced debate on the question of the "responsibility to protect". We support the broad thrust of the argument in the draft, however we wish to suggest that the final document go a little further and reflect the concept of responsibility to protect as a notion of a continuum, meaning that it should cover a broad spectrum of actions ranging from prevention, response, development, assistance, and capacity-building, and only as a last resort, to the use of force.

We welcome and strongly support the inclusion of a separate paragraph on "human security". Individual men and women face a wide range of deprivations and threats to their survival and to their dignity as human beings, such as violence, the denial of basic human rights, poverty, infectious diseases, lack of education, etc. The concept of "human security" addresses these challenges in a comprehensive manner. Building on the concept of "human security", Japan has actively contributed to the establishment of the UN Trust Fund for Human Security, which has funded 133 projects in 104 countries to date. We believe that the time has come for world leaders at the September summit to embrace the concept as presented in the draft.

We support the "culture of peace" initiatives. The concepts of a culture of peace and of dialogue among civilizations were upheld as important pillars in the declaration adopted at the Asian-African Summit in April. We wish to see progress on this subject this year, which marks the mid-point in the UN International Decade for the Culture of Peace. In this regard, as announced by Prime Minister Koizumi at the Asian-African Summit, Japan will host a World Civilization Forum in July, thereby promoting discussions among leading experts from around the world to overcome difference and to create a new paradigm for the world.

Strengthening the United Nations

Mr. President,

Strengthening the UN cannot be achieved without significant institutional reform of our Organization, and in particular its organs. First, Japan supports the language on strengthening the General Assembly. We will work with other countries to reach agreement on the concrete measures contained in the proposed General Assembly resolution and to implement them.

Secondly on Security Council reform, the Secretary-General has said, "no reform of the United Nations would be complete without reform of the Security Council."

Considerable debate has taken place on Security Council reform. On that basis, the Group of Four —Brazil, Germany, India, and Japan—has circulated a draft framework resolution for expansion of the membership of the Council and improvement of its methods of working. It has created certain fresh, positive momentum among the membership on this long-overdue issue. The draft was developed through open and flexible consultations and dialogue involving all regional and other groups, the permanent members, and many individual member states.

The draft framework resolution is the only proposal that at this moment stands as a serious proposal asking for a decision by member states. We believe it contains an achievable plan that can readjust the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security to the realities of today's world, and to do so in this 60th anniversary year of the Organization. The choice for us now would be between reforming the Security Council so as to make it more effective in responding to today's multi-faceted challenges, or keeping the status quo. The status quo hardly seems a viable option since it is supported by only a small minority of member states.

The Group of 4 intends to formally submit the draft framework resolution to the General Assembly at the earliest and most appropriate timing for member states' consideration and eventual decision. As the Secretary-General said, we hope that a decision on Security Council reform will be taken before the September summit. And in the remaining days and weeks we intend to further continue consultations with a view to arriving at the broadest possible agreement on this important issue.

My delegation would like to take this opportunity to thank those member states that have decided to co-sponsor the draft resolution and others who have expressed their support for it. We ask more countries to join in support of the resolution. We thank in particular the delegation of France, one of the permanent 5, for its announced co-sponsorship.

A Secretariat with the highest standard of competency and moral integrity is essential. My delegation favors the Secretary-General's efforts to make necessary reform and changes in the Secretariat. We therefore support the proposal to allow the Secretary-General to have more CEO-type authority and flexibility in management. We also expect to see enhanced transparency and accountability in the activities of the Secretariat vis-à-vis member states, and this includes stronger oversight functions. To that end, a full review of the rules regarding budgets and human resources is urgently needed.

We welcome the proposal for the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly "an overview of all mandates older than five years with an indication of resources which could be shifted to other priorities". We intend to consider carefully the Secretary-General's comprehensive proposal for a one-time staff buy-out, including an indication of the costs that will be involved.

With respect to ECOSOC, we broadly support the proposals in the draft as a step in the right direction. Additionally, ECOSOC should play a role in setting the mid- to long-term agenda as well as advocacy functions on the key economic and social issues of the time.

Humanitarian assistance is one of the main pillars of the UN's activities. We support the draft's call for stronger capacity for response, including standby arrangements and a restructured Central Emergency Revolving Fund.

We support the call for a stronger relationship between the UN and regional and sub-regional organizations, in particular the call for assistance to strengthen the African Union. Careful consideration is needed, however, in determining the modality of UN assistance to peace operations carried out by regional organizations. Decisions need to be made by the Security Council and the General Assembly on a case-by-case basis, with particular attention paid to financial accountability as well as the relationship between activities carried out by regional organizations and those undertaken by the United Nations. We therefore believe that it is premature to try to reach general agreement on this subject in the form of a document such as this.

In accordance with the decision taken in General Assembly resolution 50/52, we support the elimination of reference to “enemy states” in Articles 53, 77 and 107 of the Charter of the United Nations.

In conclusion, Mr. President,

The first draft you have presented to us provides a very useful, balanced foundation for further discussion as we move toward the September summit. We consider the manner in which you have tried to approach many issues, some of which are obviously controversial, to be wise and worthy of our support.

The stakes are high, and so are the rewards if we act wisely and boldly as the collective membership. To a great extent, peace and security and the welfare of humanity—both current and future generations—depends on the success of the autumn gathering. My government will spare no efforts in working with you, your facilitators, and all member states over the next 12 weeks to bring about the best outcome possible.

Thank you.