

**Statement of Mr. Atul Khare, Under-Secretary General for Operational Support
Lecture/ Symposium “UN Peace Operations: Critical Contributions of Japan**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Ohayou gozaimasu.

I would like to express my gratitude to all of you for inviting me to take part in this dialogue today. It is a great pleasure to be here. Few countries can lay claim to the long-standing dedication that Japan has exhibited to the United Nations and its peace operations.

As our third largest financial contributors – to both peacekeeping and special political missions – as well as the home country of a great number of civilian, troops and police personnel, Japan is a fundamental partner in UN peace operations.

Current Challenges of UN Peacekeeping

Our peace operations have proven highly adaptable over the years, contributing to the successful resolution of conflicts and the transition to sustainable peace.

Today, however, there is justified concern that changes to the global landscape have made the task ahead of us more formidable than ever.

We are dealing increasingly with non-traditional forces that blend in easily with local communities. This has meant additional challenges for reaching negotiated political solutions, and the targeting of peacekeepers by hostile attacks.

The spread of new technologies and the proliferation of disinformation about the United Nations affect the safety and security of peacekeepers and the success of mandate implementation.

The risks and restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the growing threats of the climate crisis, and tensions amongst global powers have all contributed to an increased instability in the regions where we operate.

In Ukraine, we are witnessing the tragic and alarming results of a divided Security Council, unable to intervene when one of its own members is party to the conflict. In a global, interconnected world, the ramifications of the events in Ukraine is rippling far beyond the region.

Yet rather than focusing on what we failed to do and questioning the role of the UN and the international community, these events must serve to reaffirm our commitment to international peace and security.

And, importantly, for each and every one of us to take urgent action where we can.

Context and Success of UN Peacekeeping

Today, UN peace operations encompass a partnership of over 120 countries contributing over 107,000 troops and personnel to our peace and security efforts. For the past seven decades, our missions have left a positive imprint in communities around the globe by supporting political processes, guiding peaceful transitions, preventing conflict, and laying down the foundations for enduring peace.

And we have only been successful – and can only continue to be successful – in these endeavours with the strong collaboration of Member States.

This year marks the thirtieth anniversary of Japan’s enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Law and its first UN peacekeeping deployment. It seems especially befitting, then, to honour the personnel deployment and in-kind contributions Japan has offered UN peace operations over the past decades.

Japan’s commitment to effective, ethical, and humane interventions is evidenced by its recent decision to provide financial contributions to the UN Refugee Agency for emergency humanitarian support activities in Ukraine, acceptance of evacuees into Japan, as well as in providing non-lethal equipment to Ukraine.

It is also evidenced as well by its remarkable record of zero misconduct including sexual exploitation and abuse cases by Japanese troops over three decades of its participation in UN peacekeeping.

Currently, Japanese military staff officers serve with distinction in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), contributing to the mission’s efforts to support the peace process, protect civilians, back humanitarian efforts and report on human rights violations.

At UN Headquarters in New York, Japanese officers serve in a variety of functions, including in the Department of Peace Operations, which manages and directs peacekeeping missions, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs responsible for monitoring and assessing political developments and overseeing special political missions.

And my own Department, which provides operational support to all UN Secretariat entities including peace operations to ensure that troops, police and civilian staff are deployed and

sustained, and that they have the accommodation, rations, fuel, technology, equipment, and medical support necessary to deliver on their mandates.

In the Department of Operational Support which also includes Office of Information and Communications Technology (OICT), more than twenty Japanese civilian officers are contributing to our peace efforts.

Key Japanese Contributions

Among the many contributions Japan has made to our efforts in the past, I would like to call special attention to Japan's role in our peacekeeping successes in Cambodia as well as Timor-Leste, where I had the privilege of serving as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

In Cambodia, Japanese peacekeepers served as military engineers, electoral observers, and civilian police officers, and successfully laid the foundation for sustainable peace. They worked under the able leadership of Mr. Yasushi Akashi, Chief of Mission of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), who I consider to be my "Sensei" of peacekeeping.

We also honour the sacrifices of Mr. Haruyuki Takata from the Japanese Police and Mr. Atsuhiko Nakata, an elections UN Volunteer, who lost their lives in the pursuit of peace in Cambodia.

The beneficial impact of talented Japanese peacekeepers was likewise noticeable in Timor-Leste. To this day, the Timorese people acknowledge the infrastructure built by the Japanese Ground Self Defence Forces engineers, referring to them as the "Japanese roads" and "Japanese bridges."

Yet the contributions of Japanese peacekeepers in Timor-Leste extend far beyond the material realm.

I am especially grateful to Mr. Sukehiro Hasegawa, who headed the UN Office in Timor-Leste (UNOTIL), and from whom I learned some of the most important lessons in my time at the United Nations,

And to Mr. Takahisa Kawakami, Deputy Special Representative for the Rule of Law, whom we lost to natural causes while working on strengthening national security institutions.

Your professor Mr. Jun Kukita helped improve the quality of education that Timorese children receive, and he even brought in Jackie Chan to convince youth gangs to stop fighting,

Japanese police officers led by Mr. Shigeru Yotoriyama drafted textbooks for national police that are still being used today.

Mr. Ken Inoue, helped build and strengthen government institutions; Mr. Takakazu Ito, provided direct advice and support to me in developing and implementing sustainable political solutions, and Ms. Michiko Ikarashi assisted in the holding of free and fair elections and the management of my office.

Their contributions, alongside many other Japanese nationals who served in Timor-Leste, continue to live on, as the country continues down the path of sustainable peace and development following the closure of UNMIT in 2012.

We recognize their legacy in the upcoming swearing-in of president-elect José Ramos-Horta, which marks the successful completion of two rounds of free, fair, and largely peaceful elections.

These examples offer only a small glimpse into the impactful support Japan has offered to UN peacekeeping over the years.

Action For Peacekeeping

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

While we may take heart in these successes, our work is far from over.

UN peacekeeping is undergoing a powerful and necessary transformation to be better equipped to respond to the challenges I mentioned at the beginning of these remarks. In 2018, the Secretary-General launched the **Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)** initiative, calling on the Security Council, troop-and-police contributors, host governments, regional organizations and other peacekeeping partners to do three things come together to enhance peace efforts on multiple fronts.

The key objectives of A4P are to:

- (1) refocus peacekeeping with realistic expectations;
- (2) make peacekeeping missions stronger and safer; and
- (3) mobilize greater support for political solutions and for well-structured, well-equipped, and well-trained forces.

We count with the support of 155 Member States and four international organizations that endorsed the A4P Declaration. The Declaration categorizes UN peacekeeping work into eight main thematic areas: politics; Women, Peace and Security (WPS); protection; safety and security; performance and accountability; partnerships; sustaining peace; and conduct.

In an effort to accelerate the implementation of the A4P priorities and strengthen our momentum, the Secretary-General introduced A4P+. This Declaration proposes concrete action plans through which to translate the vision of A4P principles into the reality within Headquarters and our field missions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Among the central tenets of A4P/A4P+ is the goal to **strengthen the performance** of UN peacekeeping operations.

But how exactly can we improve mandate implementation and mission performance?

We believe **training** to be, in large part, the answer to effective performances.

Here again Japan's contributions have left their mark. Just to name a few, the roll out of a regional Protection of Civilians training, the hosting of Women Protection Advisors training, and organization of demining training, have all come to fruition thanks to the partnership between the UN and the Government of Japan.

Triangular Partnership Programme

One training partnership that deserves special mentions is the Triangular Partnership Programme (TPP). The TPP brings together the Secretariat, Troop- and Police-Contributing Countries, and Member States with expertise and resources, to strengthen peacekeeping. This unique partnership was born out of the 2014 Leaders Summit of Peacekeeping when then-Prime Minister Abe announced Japan's intention to contribute to UN engineering training.

I believe his decision stemmed from Japan's recognition that partnerships act as multipliers in maximizing impact to address current and future challenges. It empowers and enables T/PCCs to contribute more effectively to UN peacekeeping.

With the support and active involvement of Japan and an increasing number of Member States, the TPP has expanded into a comprehensive programme with remote and in-person training courses in Africa, Southeast Asia, and surrounding regions. Japan played a leading role in conducting many engineering training courses over the years and in the development of a remote training course on Construction Process Management in December last year.

With the collaboration of dedicated Member States like Japan, over 7,000 uniformed personnel have received expert training on engineering, medical, C4ISR (command, control, communications, computers, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance), and many of these peacekeepers are currently serving in missions throughout Africa.

Our shared aim for these trainings is to create self-sustaining national training capacities. And to allow Member States to consistently deploy units trained to UN standards.

The strength of the Triangular Partnership Programme lies in its flexibility to create new solutions for evolving challenges of peacekeeping and capacity gaps. As the needs of our peace operations change, the TPP adapts to offer the adequate training, resources, and expertise to address those challenges.

In the eight years that have followed the TPP's inception, the Government of Japan has contributed close to US\$90 million to it.

Japanese Self Defence Force personnel have provided crucial training to military personnel from across the world on the operation and maintenance of heavy engineering equipment.

This is the type of training that can greatly affect engineering capacities in peacekeeping missions. I would like to express my thanks to the Government of Japan for this support.

We hope that Japan will continue to be a champion of the UN Triangular Partnership Programme as it further expands and continue to strengthen our peacekeeping endeavours.

Medical Services

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Deploying personnel that are well-trained and well-equipped to fulfil their assignments is of paramount importance. But equally important, of course, is that we prioritize the wellbeing of our peacekeepers.

As the United Nations is increasingly deploying personnel to high-risk environments, we are taking a series of measures to address systemic challenges and help protect the safety and security of our personnel.

We have been rolling out basic and advanced first aid training to Troop-Contributing Countries, implementing quality standards for the delivery of healthcare services, and developing course materials for the Field Medical Assistant Course, which we plan to offer regularly.

We also continue to upgrade conditions of our Level I and Level II hospitals in high-risk missions – namely, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Mali, and South Sudan – to ensure that our peacekeepers have access to the best medical services possible while fulfilling their mandates.

As such, we have invested great time and resources into **improving the effectiveness of the medical rescue chain in our peacekeeping missions.**

This involves ramping up three lines of efforts that comprise our rescue chain:

The first is “scoop and run,” by which we offer emergency casualty or medical evacuations for injured or ill peacekeepers, transporting them to hospitals where they can get the medical attention they need.

The second is “stay and play,” referring to pre-hospital trauma care that is provided on the ground, before the patient is transported to a hospital.

And finally, **telemedicine**. In 2021, with Japan’s financial support, we began an initiative to introduce our telemedicine capabilities in four high-risk UN missions through the Triangular Partnership Programme.

Telemedicine has the potential to transform the way healthcare can be delivered in remote or conflict-ridden areas. It grants access to a network of healthcare specialists irrespective of mission location, and therefore ensures that we offer the best possible healthcare to those risking their lives in the cause of peace.

As we look to advance telemedical care to other UN missions and bring on more innovative technologies, we count on the continued engagement of partners like Japan.

Peacekeeping & the Environment

And we won't stop there. We know we need to do better when it comes to the indirect impact and the makeup of our peacekeeping missions.

Back in 2016, I launched the **Environment Strategy for Peace Operations** to improve the environmental footprint of our peacekeeping missions. With support from Member States, important advances have been made in mitigating wastewater risk, reducing our energy consumption, setting baselines, and implementing environmental management systems.

Despite this progress, we still rely heavily on diesel generators to sustain our operations. Peacekeeping operations are often amongst the largest energy generators and consumers in their host states. Considering the low electrification rates in several of the communities where we operate, we are exploring opportunities to transition our missions to renewable energy, both during operation and after the UN departs.

Moving forward, we see the integration of renewable energy sources in peace operations not only as an environmental mitigation strategy but also as a key solution to reduce the frequency of attack-prone fuel convoys.

To this end, I believe that there are new, critical partnership opportunities for Japan and the UN to work together, including training and capacity building projects for renewable energy.

Women in Peacekeeping

The same can also be said for our work around increased women's participation and leadership in peacekeeping efforts.

The fact that the Secretary-General has achieved gender parity amongst senior leadership is reason to celebrate, but progress in the field has been slower and more uneven. That is why initiatives such as the Senior Women Talent Pipeline, which ensure more women are appointed to field positions, are fundamental in promoting the active and meaningful participation of women in peace and security.

As of now, 56 appointments at managerial and leadership field positions have been made of candidates in the Pipeline. And later this year, the Pipeline is launching a new call for applications so that we may meet the growing demands for women in senior field positions.

Japan has been a committed donor and supporter of the Pipeline, for which we are very thankful.

Let me also emphasize the importance of Member States assuming a stronger commitment to mainstreaming women into their national armies and police through better access to training and opportunities for peacekeeping deployment.

My Department also continues to administer the Young Professionals Programme to improve the gender and geographic diversity of our workplace by welcoming highly qualified young professionals from unrepresented and underrepresented countries, including Japan, to serve at the United Nations.

I encourage young Japanese women and men to join us through the Young Professionals Programme.

I hope to see many more enthusiastic Japanese like the students of Kwansei Gakuin University to contribute their talent and skills at the United Nations.

Expanding Japan's Contributions to Peacekeeping

As we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the enactment of the International Peace Cooperation Act, I sincerely thank Japan for its longstanding contributions to international peace and to UN peace operations.

I hope that we can continue to count on Japan to expand and seek innovative ways to contribute to our peace endeavours.

It is true that, when we speak of peace operations, we often direct our attention to troops and police forces. And while we continue to welcome the participation of highly skilled Japanese troops, including engineering units, we recognize the constitutional restrictions and logistical challenges of deploying Self-Defence Force troops.

But the needs of UN peace operations are vast and many – as are the opportunities to meet them.

From offering trainings and equipment to T/PCCs and providing medical care through telemedicine, and providing expert guidance from Japanese researchers and practitioners.

I am hopeful that Japan will continue to expand its active participation and committed engagement with UN peacekeeping.

Concluding Thoughts

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude by saying that we are engaged upon an international partnership that must be constantly nourished through investment in dialogue, trust, and results.

Not just in the field, but also in discussions such as this one.

I am convinced that working together, we will succeed in bringing peace, security, development, rule of law, and respect for human rights to those countries that are tragically affected by conflict and war.

Thank you once again to the people and Government of Japan for its contributions to peace operations, and to you all, for allowing me to address you today.