

Statement by H.E. Mr. Katsutoshi Kaneda
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Mr. President,
Distinguished delegates and participants,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is truly an honor for me to speak at the opening session of this conference. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the organizers for granting me this privilege. I am especially delighted to speak on human security, which the Government of Japan has consistently promoted as one of its foreign policy objectives.

Our world today is marked by unprecedented technological progress and economic development and the rapid global movement of goods, services, finances and people. This dynamism has created numerous opportunities but also new tensions. Since the end of the Cold War, threats such as abject poverty, conflict, infectious disease, environmental degradation, transnational organized crime and terrorism have necessitated a reexamination of our approaches to security.

As Madame Sadako Ogata pointed out at this conference three years ago, the traditional framework of state security—in other words, measures aimed at defending national borders against external dangers—cannot by itself protect citizens from these new threats. I believe that the international community urgently needs a new paradigm of security, one redefined from the citizens' perspective.

The concept of human security aims at protecting the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment. In other words, human security

tries to give each individual the building blocks necessary to protect his or her own safety, livelihood, and dignity.

Human security is people-centered. It seeks to maximize people's potential by empowering them to take charge of their own lives. While states have the primary responsibility for protecting their citizens, human security seeks to play an active part in helping citizens to define and exercise their freedoms. Empowered people can make better choices and cope more effectively with insecurity.

It is NGOs and civil society that have a major role in implementing human security since they best embody the people-centered approach. Indeed, NGOs and civil society are ideally suited to putting human security into practice on the ground, particularly through community-based development. As providers of humanitarian assistance, they are also indispensable for ensuring human security in emergency situations.

Governments, international organizations and public and private institutions have made individual efforts to address various crises within the framework of their mandates, expertise and human and financial resources, but their approaches have not always been people-centered. Consequently, the responses of the international community as a whole to the threats I mentioned have tended to be fragmented. It is essential to integrate our responses based on real demands on the ground.

One attempt at integration is the Trust Fund for Human Security established in the United Nations in 1999 through the initiative of Japan. It is open to United Nations agencies and assists them in implementing projects aimed at addressing human security concerns.

The Trust Fund requires its projects to respond to real problems and real demands on the ground, pulling together the efforts of UN organizations to address the multi-sectoral demands of communities. Significantly, Trust Fund projects place a major emphasis on partnership with NGOs and civil society. To date, over 150 projects have been carried out across the world. In many of these projects, civil society groups are working very closely with UN organizations to provide effective and efficient assistance.

For example, UNHCR collaborated with Oxfam UK and Norwegian People's Aid to ensure human security by promoting coexistence among divided communities in Rwanda in Africa.

Another example can be found in Cambodia. Many national and international NGOs are working in that country in partnership with UN-HABITAT to tackle poverty-related problems in slums and squatter settlements in Phnom Penh. In many other cases, too, it is obvious that little progress can be achieved without the participation, commitment and determined action of the NGOs involved in these communities.

Today, the United Nations is struggling to meet challenges in complex emergencies and crises and also carrying out sustainable development initiatives. I would like to recall what Secretary-General Kofi Annan observed in his report, "In Larger Freedom," namely, "Humanity will not enjoy security without development, it will not enjoy development without security, and it will not enjoy either without respect for human rights."

I believe that the civil society groups represented here can agree that these issues are interrelated. I believe that the whole effort to reform the United Nations should take a people-centered approach and seek to create an organization that can provide efficient, effective and timely assistance. We need to integrate today's fragmented responses to current threats by protecting and empowering people. Last year the General Assembly agreed to further discuss and define the notion of human security, as is stated in paragraph 143 of the World Summit outcome document. It is clear that, as actors working at the grassroots level, NGOs and civil society organizations will have an increasingly important role in this process.

We, the international community, are striving to achieve a world where the two major goals of human security and sustainable are fully realized. We need a clear acknowledgement of the challenges we face, the interconnectedness of the issues and the need to deal with them in an integrated, not fragmented, manner. To engage in such action, we need to build a strong global partnership that can be a platform for everyone. The annual DPI/NGO Conference is a precious opportunity to mobilize our energies towards that end.

I have been told that over 2500 representatives from non-governmental and civil society organizations from around the world are expected to attend this conference. I hope that their presence will energize the debate and lead to meaningful contributions to human security and sustainable development—two of the great challenges of the twenty-first century.

Lastly, I would like express my sincere respect for the outgoing General Assembly President Ambassador Eliasson, under whose remarkable leadership significant achievements in United Nations reform were made.

Thank you very much.