

Rev. 1



*Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations*

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 223-4300 · www.un.int/japan/

*Check against delivery*

ADDRESS BY H.E. MR. NAOTO KAN  
PRIME MINISTER OF JAPAN  
AT THE HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE SIXTY-FIFTH SESSION OF  
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

*PROMISE TO THE NEXT GENERATION*

22 SEPTEMBER 2010  
NEW YORK

Mr. President,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Ten years have passed since the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were launched here at the United Nations. We came together under one objective, attainment of the MDGs, and have worked together to fight poverty. During this decade, we have achieved remarkable victories. The under-five child mortality rate has been decreased by more than 3.7 million child deaths per year as compared with 1990, and an additional 37 million children have come to enjoy the benefits of primary education. I would like, at the outset, to express my respect for the efforts of those who committed themselves to achieving these outcomes.

Such advances notwithstanding, the challenge to achieve these goals is not yet won. Today, in order to address areas where progress has been particularly slow, I will announce concrete “promises” in the field of health, including maternal and child health, as well as in the field of education, including basic education.

I call this initiative the “Kan Commitment”.

Mr. President,

Last June, on becoming Prime Minister, I made a pledge to the people of Japan that I would achieve a society in which human suffering is reduced to a minimum. I believe that the role of political leaders is to minimize to the extent possible sources of misery such as disease, poverty and

conflict. In other words, their role is to establish a “society in which human suffering is reduced to a minimum”. I have long held this belief and I think that it resonates with the philosophy behind the MDGs. Only when such a society is realized can each and every individual find his or her own way of life and take on challenges for the fulfillment of personal dreams. My first promise based on this philosophy is that Japan will make contributions to the field of health in order to protect people’s lives.

First of all, let me touch upon the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, which Japan helped to found. Earlier this month, I visited the Global Fund’s photo exhibition “Access to Life”, which was held in Japan. When I was Minister of Health and Welfare, I acknowledged for the first time the responsibility of the Government concerning the issue of HIV/AIDS infection caused by contaminated blood products. I apologized to all patients and reached a settlement. This experience made me even more strongly interested in the issues of various diseases including HIV/AIDS. The recent photo exhibition gave me an opportunity to renew my awareness that in Asia, Africa, South America and in many other places in the world, a large number of people affected by AIDS are still losing their lives. On the other hand, I should also note that, thanks to the development of new medicines, adequate treatment can prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV as well as return many people living with HIV to society. The Global Fund has been playing an outstanding role, and I would like to pay my sincere tribute to it. I hereby promise that, at the Third Replenishment Conference scheduled for next month, Japan will announce its intention to make contributions amounting to 800 million US dollars in the coming years.

Another major cause for concern is the fact that the number of deaths of under-five children remains high and reductions achieved to date in the mortality rate of infants and pregnant women are still far short of the targets set in the MDGs. We need to exert additional, drastic efforts. Japan will provide assistance of five billion US dollars over five years beginning in 2011 to contribute to the achievement of the health-related MDGs. We make this contribution in order to save the lives of 680 thousand mothers and 11.3 million children in cooperation with other partners. Specifically, Japan will provide intensive assistance centering on three pillars: maternal and child health, three major infectious diseases and measures to address global threats such as new influenza viruses.

At the same time, Japan will propose an assistance model in maternal and child health which gives people access to appropriate preventive services and medical care at proper facilities when they are in need. I call it “EMBRACE”. This model aims to deliver a sequence of health services including antenatal care with routine examinations and neonatal care at facilities with quality equipment and human resources, improvement in access to hospitals and immunization. This is an approach to ensure a continuum of care from pregnancy to after childbirth. I emphasized the importance of this model at the G8 Muskoka Summit and obtained the endorsement of participating

countries. Now I take this opportunity to call once again on developing countries to adopt this model and on donors and international organizations to make concerted efforts in implementing optimal assistance measures in maternal and child health.

I am convinced that Japan's world-class medical services and leading technologies will also contribute to the solution of health issues. For instance, a Japanese company that plays a leadership role in my country's business community has provided tens of millions of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets to African countries. This product has its roots in Japan's traditional wisdom of life, and cutting edge technology has allowed the anti-insect effect to last long. This has made an immeasurable contribution to the struggle for the eradication of malaria. As this example demonstrates, the role to be played by civil society, such as the private sector and NGOs, is very significant. I fully support such endeavors on the part of civil society, now and in the future.

Education, on the other hand, in conjunction with good health, provides the basis for participation in society. It is a cause of great dismay that in the world today there are many children who are forced into hard labor or are deprived of opportunities to receive an education due to poverty and conflicts. Without a proper education, young people cannot realize their potential or take an active part in their society. They lose hope, and the society in turn loses its dynamism.

Mr. President,

Japan will provide 3.5 billion US dollars in assistance over five years beginning in 2011, so as to contribute to the achievement of the education-related MDGs and to provide an education to all the children of the world, including those who have been marginalized and those living in conflict areas. To that end, Japan will cooperate with developing countries and other partners. This assistance will provide a quality educational environment for at least seven million children. Japan will also pay careful attention to post-primary education, namely, secondary education, vocational training and tertiary education. Assistance for education leads to the creation of jobs and social vitality, which I consider essential. Japan, therefore, proposes a basic education assistance model which encourages coordinated efforts among schools, communities and governments for the comprehensive improvement of the learning environment in such areas as quality of teachers, school management, treatment of girls and disabled students, nutrition, sanitation and child physical fitness. I call this "School for All". I am confident that the introduction of this model in many developing countries will lead to the diffusion of sustainable education. I call on donor countries and international organizations to work together to support children around the world in accordance with this model. Japan will definitely be standing at the forefront of such efforts.

Japan attaches importance to assistance in the field of health and education because it can serve as a basis for developing countries to achieve sustained development. From this perspective, achieving the MDGs, with emphasis on these two fields, is crucial. We must make our utmost effort to this end. It is important to follow up on this High-level Plenary Meeting. With this in mind, Japan proposes to hold an international conference in Japan next year in order to strengthen coordination among a broad range of stakeholders, not only governments but also international organizations and NGOs.

Mr. President,

Today I have announced the “Kan Commitment”, which consists of concrete measures that Japan will take, particularly in the fields of health and education. This is our promise to the next generation, who shoulder the world’s hopes for the future. The MDGs are the promises that our generation must keep to future generations. The path to their achievement overlaps with the path towards a society in which human suffering is reduced to a minimum. The goals are interrelated, and much more needs to be done. However, little time remains. We, the Member States, need to renew our commitment to achieve the MDGs by 2015 and take action. Let us work together towards achieving this critical aim.

Thank you for your kind attention.