

General Debate on
“A world in turmoil: Parliamentary cooperation and
multilateralism for peace, justice and prosperity for all”

NUKAGA Fukushima
Speaker of the House of Representatives of Japan

President Ackson, and ladies and gentlemen from around the globe, I am truly grateful to be able to participate in such an important meeting.

The challenges the international community is facing right now, including conflict, poverty, healthcare issues and climate change, have never been so severe. Under the banner of “human security,” Japan aims to create a society where people can live with dignity, free from fear and want, through cooperation with other countries based on UN-led multilateralism. To that end, Japan has spent more than 600 billion dollars in total in providing official development assistance to developing countries, focusing on the transfer of technologies and skill development.

My guiding principle is to take a grounded approach, and I have made it my life’s work to promote ODA. Before I assumed office as Speaker, for many years I served as the chair of a parliamentary league supporting Japan’s international cooperation. At the national government level, the Cabinet is actively pushing for policy on human security, as did I when I was a Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary. The policy focuses on providing quality education to all, and caring about each member of society.

One example of that policy is a project called the ASEAN University Network/Southeast Asia Engineering Education Development Network, or AUN/SEED-Net, which was launched in 2001. Under this project, 26 universities in ASEAN member states and 18 Japanese universities make the most of each other’s areas of expertise to jointly nurture students and conduct studies, creating a cycle of skill development and knowledge cultivation. Japan spent a total of 100 million dollars on this project, which has helped more than 1,400 people earn a diploma and kept expanding for over 20 years.

Let me introduce some concrete examples.

Under this project, one student attended a Japanese institute of technology to study a telecommunications system that supports today’s society and obtained a PhD in 2012.

That student is now a leading figure in advanced studies in the field in his home country and heads an institute of technology.

Another student studied earth resources engineering at Japan's Kyushu University for five years from 2003. After returning home from Japan, he worked together with local natural resources development businesses to encourage better use of natural resources in his home country, such as nickel, aluminum and copper. I have learned that in 2020, he received the highest honor given to engineers who contributed to the development of the nation's engineering sector.

As these examples demonstrate, students who studied via AUN/SEED-Net went on to become leading figures in research and education in the fields of science and technology in the region. I believe that this network, which was built through cooperation between Japan and ASEAN member nations, has greatly contributed to raising the education and research standards in the region.

The enrichment of education has helped cultivate skills among people who will lead the future, develop national economies, and strengthen the foundation for regional and global stability and prosperity. Japan intends to continue to actively offer such support.

By expanding these efforts, we have contributed to the sustainable development of the entire international community and are hoping to continue to do so. In this regard, we, as parliamentarians, who received a mandate of the people, intend to deepen parliamentary cooperation and dialogue through discussion on a global stage, with the IPU playing a central role, to contribute to expanding international cooperation in the area of education and in other fields.

It is my greatest pleasure to meet with you, representatives of your parliaments, to exchange views and to promise to commit myself as a parliamentarian to actively conducting activities and offering support to the world. Amid the difficulties facing the international community, I would like to ask you, as representatives from national parliaments, for your cooperation and utmost effort at this conference to ensure the stability and prosperity of the international community.

Let us do our best together. Thank you.