

STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF JAPAN

OSCE Asian Partner for Co-operation Group Meeting (27 September)

Dear Chairperson, Moderator, Distinguished Speakers,

Let me welcome you all to today's fourth OSCE Asian Partner for Cooperation Group meeting in 2023, held this time under the co-partnership between Japan and Poland. At the outset, I wish to thank my Polish colleague Ambassador Adam Hałaciński and his staff for all the effort and support rendered to our delegation in co-organizing this meeting. My thanks also go to the OSCE Secretary General, Ms. Helga Schmid, for accompanying us during the discussions and to our Estonian colleague, Ambassador Kaja Tael, for accepting the role of moderator.

In addressing today's meeting, I cannot but stress the important role the OSCE has been playing as a platform for confidence building and constructive dialogue, serving as a key instrument for the consolidation of security and cooperation in Europe. Even at a time when Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is overshadowing the work of the OSCE, posing such difficulties as next year's chair, Secretary General and other key positions or the budget, this value of OSCE, I believe, is still relevant.

I am glad to note that, in particular, the series of discussions at ACPG meetings we have had thus far, have shown the spirit of constructive engagement and cooperation, to foster mutual understanding among the participants. Today, with the cooperation of Poland as the chair of ACPG, OSCE and other partners that we have contacted, we are pleased to share with you Asia's experience – "Approaches to peacebuilding - efforts in Asia towards sustaining peace". We welcome experts with rich experience in peacebuilding in Asia joining us, and together with the participating States and Asian Partners, we will discuss in depth the peacebuilding desperately needed now, based on Asian cases.

Indeed, since the establishment of the world order after World War II, with the United Nations and other multilateral systems at its core, we Asians, too, have faced armed conflicts or

otherwise that inflicted pains to people within the national borders or beyond, sometimes involving multiple conflicting parties. Some of them remain unresolved, such as on the Korean Peninsula or in Kashmir, others are emerging, like in the South China Sea. And yet, we have striven to overcome the difficulties in the quest for peace. Look at East Timor, Sri Lanka or Mindanao. Personally, I was among the Japanese diplomats who worked for the achievement of a sustainable peace in Cambodia, after the country had been torn apart due to a long-standing civil war among four factions and the preceding Khmer Rouge regime – a reign of terror. I was also involved in Japan’s historical engagement in UN peacekeeping in Cambodia, which marked the first overseas deployment of Japan’s Self Defense Forces for the maintenance of international peace and security. The wisdom gained from peacebuilding in Asia is also articulated in Japan’s vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP), the new version of which was announced by Prime Minister Kishida earlier this year.

Partly for this reason, I am excited to present to you the upcoming discussions and hope very much that we will all appreciate today’s APCG meeting. Although I am not a daydreamer, I also hope that today’s discussion will contribute to bringing OSCE’s role as a peacebuilder back on track again. How can’t I hope that some of the “Approaches to peacebuilding-efforts in Asia towards sustaining peace” will serve as a reference to peacebuilding in the war in Ukraine or other areas of conflict in Europe, either today or in the future?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan has been continuously promoting cooperation with the OSCE for more than 30 years. This year, Secretary General Ms. Schmid visited Japan and held many rounds of high-level dialogues. Representing my country, I too have been addressing the PC meetings on various occasions. If everything goes well, Japan will be hosting the Asian Conference next year. Today’s APCG meeting is a preview of next year’s conference and I hope that many of us will meet again in this setup, hopefully in Tokyo.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these remarks, I wish you all vigorous and productive discussions for today.

Thank you for your attention.