

H.E Kofi Annan | 3 June 2009 | Tokyo University

## Opening Remarks at Tokyo University Global Leadership Programme

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Let me start by thanking the University President Mr Hamada, the Dean, Professor Inouye and, Mr Osikawa, the Executive Editor of Yomiuri Shimbun for those kind words and welcome.

It is a great pleasure to be back here at one of the world's finest universities.

Through the talents, efforts and achievements of its staff and students, this university has been a force for good not only in Japan but in the wider world.

It is why I feel very privileged that I can now count myself as one of your graduates – thanks to the honorary degree you so kindly bestowed on me three years ago.

I am also re-assured that I will have at my side today for the discussions to follow my wise and good friend Sadako Ogata.

There is plenty to talk about. Since my last visit, the world has become a more uncertain place.

The challenges we spoke about three years ago remain – and new ones have emerged.

There is still a need, as has been underlined in the last couple of weeks, to redouble efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons – the main topic of my address on that occasion.

In the area of disarmament, as in many others, Japan plays an invaluable role in the world by its moral example and leadership.

This leadership is needed as never before.

It can only be strengthened by the new Global Leadership Studies Program we are celebrating today.

We sorely need sound leadership, too, as the world wrestles with the severest global recession for over sixty years.



We find ourselves in uncharted and stormy waters. The world's economy has shrunk for the first time for generations.

It has also brought home, perhaps as never before, the true meaning of globalisation.

There is now a much clearer understanding that our economies and prospects have become inextricably linked.

Here in Japan, you are painfully aware of these connections.

Japan may be a long way from the epicentre of this financial earthquake.

The responsibility for the mistakes at the root of this crisis doesn't lie here.

Your economy, however, has been hit hard as the latest sobering economic figures have highlighted.

But severe as the impact has been here on the economy, business and individuals, Japan remains a rich and resilient nation.

This is not to minimize the pain being felt but to point to the efforts being made and resources mobilized to minimize damage and speed recovery.

But such national resources are simply not available in the developing world and, in particular, in Africa.

It is the impact of this unprecedented crisis on Africa – and the responsibility this places on the leadership of partners like Japan, I want to talk about today.

In the early days when the crisis was centred on the banks, there were forecasts that, for once, Africa might escape largely unscathed. But as the financial crisis swept into the wider economy, those hopes were dashed.

Africa has found itself facing the equivalent of an economic tsunami.

Demand for commodities and their price have crashed

Credit has dried up as has foreign investment.

Money sent home by Africans working abroad has fallen sharply.

Overall, the World Bank predicts sub-Saharan Africa will see expected incomes fall by over \$50 billion this year.

Unlike richer countries, African Governments can't mobilize resources to offset this fall, stimulate their economies and protect their people.

Africa also lacks richer regional neighbours to which, for example, the emerging economies of Asia have turned for help.

The result is that money is running out to fund even basic services.

Nor do Africans have the protection of a welfare safety net.

As jobs are lost and wages cut, 50 million more people could be added to those already living on less than \$2 dollars a day.

This fall in household income will be felt not just in increased anxiety but in more famine, disease and loss of life.

As always, children and women will be the main casualties.

What makes it harder still is that this misery comes on top of another crisis, with its roots outside Africa.

It is pollution from the industrialized world which is causing climate change.

Yet it is Africa which will feel its worst impact.

In many parts of Africa, an environmental crisis is already becoming an economic and humanitarian disaster.

And these twin shocks are damaging Africa just when there has been remarkable progress.

Improvements which better targeted support from countries like Japan and institutions like JICA have helped accelerate.

It is conflict, hunger and gross failures of leadership which are still too rife in Africa which get the most attention.

But away from these headlines, a different story has been unfolding.

Africa's economic growth has been strong.

Democracy and good government are spreading. Long-running conflicts have given way to stability.

Increasingly countries from outside the continent – with Asia in the lead – have seen Africa as a place of opportunities rather than problems.

These new investment were helping fund improvements in health care, education and employment.



But there is now a real risk this progress will be wiped out and reversed.

And this will be accelerated if richer countries use the excuse of the recession to fall into the trap of protectionism or break aid promises.

I am glad to see Japan last month declaring publicly that it will stand by its commitment to double bilateral aid to Africa.

Broken promises would only add to Africa's sense of unfairness and anger.

A sense of unfairness which has been fuelled by watching trillions of dollars found by the world's richest countries for national bail out and stimulus packages.

Of course, healthy economies in the developed world are vital for Africa's recovery and future prosperity.

But more money has been found to rescue one US company than all the OECD combined countries spend annually on development aid.

If the world turns a blind eye to Africa's plight, this anger will only increase.

And, of course, the pain and damage will not be confined within the continent.

It is not just altruism but self-interest which demands action.

For as the economic crisis has underlined, what happens in one part of the world – the good and the bad – is no longer constrained by borders.

As Madam Ogata and her colleagues on the Commission on Human Security memorably spelt out five years ago, we all share responsibility for each other's security.

Since this landmark report, the international community has given new impetus to the concept of responsibility.

Importantly we have seen acceptance of the responsibility to protect civilian populations against genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

We now need to advance on this principle and to ensure we deliver on it – and hope Japan can take the lead again in Asia and elsewhere on how this can be achieved.

But as Madam Ogata stressed five years ago, globalization also provides important new opportunities to tackle the world's problems.

For with vision from Africa's partners and leadership both within and outside the continent, Africa can help contribute to global prosperity.

For Africa – and its citizens – have enormous potential.

Africa is rich in natural resources. Its people are full of talent and entrepreneurial drive.

There is vast potential for renewable energy to meet shortages in a sustainable way.

But to play this role Africa urgently needs the support and full engagement of its partners in a sustained and reliable way.

We need countries such as Japan to continue to look beyond their borders.

As well as urgent support to meet the short-fall in income and to ease credit now, there must be long-term investment in Africa's infrastructure – something Japan recognized as vital last year.

Such investment will help not just Africa but set solid foundations for sustained global recovery, stimulating trade, creating jobs, spreading prosperity and boosting enterprise.

Agriculture is another area where Japan is already giving an important lead.

Africa is the only continent which can not feed itself.

Without investment across the agricultural value chain, the damaging impact of climate change will only worsen this food insecurity.

But the technological expertise already exists to develop and grow appropriate crops which can feed Africa and export to the world.

The efforts of the Coalition for African Rice Development – led by Japan through JICA – are showing the way.

We must see investment and political leadership to deliver a uniquely African Green Revolution which takes into account the diversity of the continent.

But it is not only in agriculture that Africa desperately needs assistance.

There must be help, too, in combating the impact of climate change on its people.

The major industrialized countries like the United States, Europe and Japan must lead at Copenhagen by agreeing major cuts in their emissions.

Only then will we see the newly industrializing countries prepared to scale back their own growth in emissions.

They will also need help, as will Africa, to continue economic growth in a sustainable way.

The help promised at the G8 summit at Hokkaido to help countries adapt to the climate change already underway must also be delivered – and to a timetable which will make a difference.

We need to see better co-ordination, too on aid.

I know this is something which Japan and JICA, under Madam Ogata's leadership, sees as a priority.

She has made clear that much more can be achieved through partnership.

But this also requires richer countries to honour commitments to Africa.

The Tokyo International Conference on African Development and the G8 last year in Hokkaido again put Africa in the spotlight.

I congratulate Japan for the leadership it has shown and for increasing aid to Africa by over 50% last year.

Reneging on promises – on aid as well as lifting barriers to trade – would be a breach of trust.

Indeed there is a strong case to be made for boosting aid beyond existing commitments to meet increasing need.

However, the main responsibility for solving Africa's problems remains with its own leaders.

Commitments to improve good governance, to respect human rights and the rule of law must be kept.

African leaders can't insist its partners keep their promises while failing to keep their side of the compact.

This is what their own citizens demand as well. Africans, too, deserve honest, accountable and effective Government.

We need fundamental reform of our multi-lateral institutions, too, so they are more representative, legitimate and effective.

Africa must be given a voice in shaping global solutions in reformed financial and political institutions.

We must seize this once-in-a-generation opportunity to reshape the international architecture to reflect the realities and priorities of the modern world.

We are living through difficult, extraordinary times.

But in every crisis there is opportunity. We must not squander it.

We must ensure the events of the last few months remind us of our shared responsibilities.

We must remember that peace, prosperity and stability in any region will not be possible if poverty, environmental damage and despair elsewhere is ignored.

If we rise to the challenges, then the world can emerge fairer and stronger.

Japan has a critical leadership role in meeting these ambitions.

And it is your generation who must pick up the challenge from those like Sadako and myself.

I want to end, if I may, by speaking to the students here directly.

You should be proud of your achievements.

The education you are receiving is a privilege for which you have worked extremely hard. But it is also a responsibility.

It is a responsibility to use your talents and energy to improve our world.

The events of the last few months have underlined how small our planet has become and how, wherever we live, our futures are now so closely inter-linked.

You are the first generation who can genuinely call yourself citizens of the world.

So whatever you are studying, whatever your ambitions, you have to think globally.

It means understanding that your decisions and actions can have an impact – for good and bad - on people right across the other side of our planet.

You must constantly look outwards beyond the boundaries of your community and your country.

We have seen the power of the forces of globalization. We now have to make sure we shape them for good.

It needs you to be ready to show leadership in tackling challenges not just here in Japan but in the wider world.



The way you respond to these challenges will decide the health and happiness of millions of people across the globe.

It is a big responsibility. But it is your world now. You must have the courage to change it for the better.

I, for one, have every confidence in your ability to rise to the challenge.

I wish you every success.

**Ends**