Statement by Dr. Tatsuo Arima,
Special Envoy of the Government of Japan

at

the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies

on 30 October 2006, Doha, Qatar

The Hon. Chair,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, on behalf of the Government of Japan, I should like to extend my profound gratitude to the Government of Qatar for hosting this valuable conference, and, indeed, for its gracious hospitality.

The Hon. Chair,

Democracy derives its legitimacy from protecting the dignity of the citizens by guaranteeing their rights and freedoms through the rule of law. As regards the freedom, we recall it was in 1941 that the Atlantic Charter for the first time set the goal of realizing the world a peace that would enable all the people “to live in freedom from fear and want.” The condition of fear and poverty certainly erodes the human dignity. And the goal is as yet to be fulfilled.

Democracy assumes the plurality of the citizens’ choices in the matter of faith and value. For democracy to remain viable, it has to nurture in the citizen’s mind the habit to understand and respect the individual and communal experiences of others, including all those others living beyond our borders in this ever globalizing world.

The Hon. Chair,

I attended in the year 2000 in Warsaw the first meeting of the Community of Democracies. By then, the post Cold War optimism about peace and democracy had dissipated in the midst of the eruption of the old and new threats; the ethnic and religious hatred exploding against even women and children as witnessed on the Balkan Peninsula, the deterioration
of biosphere, the depletion of natural resources, HIV/AIDS, the proliferation of the weapons of mass-destruction with their delivery vehicles, the widening gap between the rich and the poor or organized crime. It is clear that no nation alone could cope with any one of these threats. And the democracies there gathered with their commitment to the protection of the human dignity were called upon to work together to seek their solution. UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan last year stated, "There will be no development without security and no security without development. And both development and security also depend on respect for human rights and the rule of law." "Thus," he says, "democracy is the very foundation for the international community to move forward stably."

The Hon. Chair,

In this globalizing world, we should recognize that the evolution of democracy takes various forms as Japan's history testifies. The case of Japan also did early prove that democracy is not an exclusive prerogative of any particular race or culture. Be that as it may, the strength of democracy rests on the citizens' participation in the political and developmental processes and on the promotion of human rights. Such participation and such promotion is particularly important in a mid-to-long term basis to solve the problems of inequality and poverty.

Based on our own successful experiences, what we call "Japan's ODA Charter", which guides our aid policies, states; "The most important philosophy of Japan's ODA is to support the self-help efforts of developing countries based on good governance." Japan respects the ownership of developing countries of their own destiny. And in extending our cooperation, we respect and trust their development strategies." This Charter goes on to state, "Japan will give priority to assisting developing countries that make active efforts to pursue peace, democratization, and the protection of human rights."

The Hon. Chair,

In helping the developing countries to come into the possession of ownership of their growth, we consider human resources development most critical. Japan has placed the greatest priority on it, empowering the individual citizens through, for example, assistance in education or in
information and telecommunication technology, to enable them to overcome their vulnerabilities inherent in poor communities. From the same perspective, Japan has actively provided cooperation for gender equality for the empowerment of women. In the final analysis, the removal of fear, inequality and poverty as visualized in MDGs, depends on the vibrant will of the citizens living under democratic governance.

The Hon. Chair,

Democratization is an enterprise requiring the perseverance, courage, and wisdom of vigilant people. Of the countries that have launched this enterprise after the Cold War, unfortunately, there are those in turmoil with ethnic conflicts, poverty, or the lack of procedural skills in democratic governance. And there are those trying to start the enterprise. We are here to discuss how best to help them regain or start the democratic momentum.

So, briefly and lastly, I refer to the growing importance of coordinated expertise international cooperation to help the nations emerging from conflicts with their desire to build or rehabilitate democratic governance. They need help in wide ranging areas such as cease-fire monitoring, the refugee issues, the procedural know-hows of democracy or security apparatus. Afghanistan, Iraq and Timor-Leste are some of the countries where we are engaged in their peace restoring efforts. Foreign Minister Aso recently expressed our intention to help develop these expertise among the Asians.

The Hon. Chair,

In Sixty-one years since the end of the Second World War, Japan, from the state of utter desolation, has become the second largest industrialized democracy in the world. Today what motivates our commitment to help promote global growth and wellbeing is our desire to share the blessings of peace and democracy which, together with the help of international community, has made our recovery possible. Peace, democracy and our mutual cooperation as represented there should enable us to achieve finally the world free from fear and want.