

Good morning. Magandang umaga po sa inyo lahat.

I am absolutely delighted to join you today in ringing the World Peace Bell, as we celebrate the commencement of the National Peace Consciousness Month.

It is a special privilege for me to speak at this event, given Japan's ties to this bell.

In 1994, the World Peace Bell Association from Japan presented the Peace Bell to Quezon City, the Philippines.

The Peace Bells have been installed in 20 countries to date, including at the UN Headquarter in N.Y., each enduring as a symbol of peace.

First, I extend my gratitude to OPAPRU for organizing this meaningful celebration and for your service to the country for peace, reconciliation and unity.

My warm appreciation also goes to Quezon City for their care in preserving the bell's dignity for years.

Thanks to their gracious hosting, we can gather here to remember the value of peace.

Today, on the 21st celebration of Peace Month, its relevance continues to grow.

Current global landscape confronts significant challenges.

Conflicts persist, divisions deepen, and actual force stands to disrupt peace.

The peace process in the Philippines approaches a defining moment towards a new chapter.

This year also marks two 80th anniversaries: the end of World War II and the founding of the United Nations.

These milestones give us a chance to reflect on our history, examine present challenges, and consider future possibilities.

For the past 80 years, Japan has proudly and unwaveringly followed the path of a peace-loving nation.

It remains determined to never allow the devastation of war to be repeated. Japan will continue to adhere to an exclusively defense-oriented policy.

We will continue to make every possible effort to safeguard peace and secure its lasting impact, both for present and future generations.

This commitment is reflected in our policy of “Proactive Contribution to Peace.” A principle based on international cooperation and clearly laid down in Japan’s National Security Strategy.

We recognize peace is neither given nor granted but requires constant effort to build and maintain.

In this endeavor, the Philippines stands as one of Japan's closest partners.

But what are some efforts we need to make to establish and maintain peace? Allow me to highlight just three elements for today.

First, we need to have organizations, institutions and/or frameworks in place — structures that foster a preservation of peace and promote public good. These must not only exist, but also be continuously empowered.

We see this in the founding spirit of the United Nations 80 years ago; the main purpose of the UN is to maintain international peace and security; and to that end, it is to take effective collective measures in the settlement of international disputes and situations, as set out in Article One of the Charter.

Towards peace and security, Japan has been among the strong supporters of the UN's efforts. It is also among the strong advocates of UN reform.

Second, the efforts in arms control and non-proliferation are indispensable in improving a regional and global security environment.

Japan, as the only country to have ever suffered atomic bombings in war, has spearheaded international efforts towards a “world without nuclear weapons.”

Japan has made every effort to strengthen the international nuclear regime, with the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty as its cornerstone.

We have promoted practical and realistic measures of conventional weapons management, including enhancing transparency through registration.

Third, we need to address root causes of conflicts to establish durable peace. This includes unaddressed grievances and inequalities, weak governance, and socio-economic challenges.

For this purpose, Japan has been a champion of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace, or HDP, Nexus approach. We have actively promoted global peacebuilding through a multifaceted approach. This involves Official Development Assistance focused on human security and post-conflict capacity building.

In line with this, Japan remains committed to peace process in the Philippine, especially in the BARMM. We have stood alongside the Philippine government, MILF, and diverse stakeholders in the region, firmly devoted to its progress.

Here again, our approaches are firm and consistent.

Three pillars of Japan's assistance to the Mindanao Peace Process are exactly aligned with our basic approaches; Capacity building for the political transition of the Bangsamoro Government; Support for the Normalization

Process; and Development of Socio-Economic Infrastructures.

From community building to normalization assistance, we strive for long-term stability and the well-being of the people on the ground. Through development, we lay a firmer foundation for peace to thrive.

Looking to the future, I trust peace will remain our constant guide.

Next year marks the 70th Anniversary of friendship between the Philippines and Japan; A milestone built on cooperation and harmony.

Allow me to share a quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupery;

“Love does not consist in gazing at each other, but in looking outward together in the same direction.”

Guided by the same vision, Japan will continue to support the peace process efforts in the Philippines.

I believe lasting peace is best promoted when major stakeholders are united by a shared and forward-looking goal.

Japan will continue to work hand-in-hand, side-by-side with the Philippines for the betterment of the region and beyond. Our partnership on maritime issues and environmental issues remain promising examples.

“Para sa isang mapayapang bukas”(for a peaceful future),
we are committed to fostering global peace and prosperity.

With the ringing of today’s bell, may our call for peace echo
strongly — not only in sound, but in spirit.

Thank you all very much.

Mabuhay kayong lahat.
Mabuhay ang kapayapaan.