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**SPEECH BY H.E. MR. SHIGEO IWATANI, AMBASSADOR OF JAPAN
TO THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, ON THE OCCASION OF THE
PROJECT LAUNCH FOR PEACE SUPPORT OPERATION TRAINING
AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT AT THE
INTERNATIONAL PEACE SUPPORT TRAINING CENTRE**

It is a great honour for me to be able to participate and represent the Government of Japan in today's project launch for Peace Support Operation Training and Institutional Capacity Enhancement at the International Peace Support Training Centre.

I wish to welcome today's participants and want to congratulate you upon completion of the "UN/AU Police Pre-Deployment Training". I am sure you are going to play a major role in peace keeping and peace building in this region.

From the obvious enthusiasm displayed by these participants, I can be sure that the funding from Japan under the TICAD initiative will be effectively utilized.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You are all aware of the unfortunate state of the countries ravaged by conflict especially in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa regions.

Some of these countries have been persistently affected by conflict and natural disasters for almost two decades without much improvement in the situation. The present situation in Somalia is particularly worrisome.

There is a massive and urgent need to enhance the regional capability in the areas of peacekeeping and peace building.

Japan has long been a major actor in enhancing human security in the developing countries.

We have provided support to a wide range of initiatives such as: assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of ex-combatants into society; mine action; and collection and destruction of small arms and light weapons.

However, Japan has been cautious in providing direct support to countries in their peace-keeping and peace-building efforts.

Why is that?

It is because such action may give the impression, particularly to our neighboring countries, that Japan may be once again trying to become a military power and may use its intervention in various regional conflicts to dictate those nations involved.

We are now rather confident that we have successfully established our image as peace-loving country and will not repeat the same mistake as we made in the World War II.

Thus, over the last few years, direct support for peace-building efforts has become one of the main pillars of Japan's international cooperation in the area of human security.

This new stance of Japan is clearly indicated in the commitments made at the Fourth Tokyo International Conference for African Development or TICAD IV held in May last year in Yokohama and at the G8 Summit held last July in Hokkaido Japan.

Let me explain what Japan is doing in more concrete terms. Japan, through the UNDP, has funded the PKO centres in five African countries, to a tune of US\$15.5 million.

With regard to the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Region, Japan has provided US\$3.6 million towards strengthening peace training initiatives in the International Peace Support Training Centre in Kenya (this centre) and US\$3 million to the Rwanda Peace Academy.

The purpose of this project at IPSTC is to strengthen institutional and human capacity in peace support operations in order to effectively prevent, respond to and mitigate conflict and maintain peace and security in the region.

This will be done through the training of civilian police and stand-by forces for deployment in cases of conflict.

We congratulate the Government of Kenya and the UNDP for the major role they play in the implementation of this project which will not only benefit the country but the region as a whole.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Japan intends to continue making active contributions in this area of peace-building and peace-keeping.

However, in view of the fact that the national budget is currently very tight, it is imperative that the series of projects we initiated recently including this one should succeed.

Otherwise the budget office or the parliament of Japan does not allow us to go ahead and fund additional projects.

It is therefore my sincere wish that by the Government of Kenya and other participating African countries taking ownership of this project and through the continued partnership of UNDP and the Government of Japan this funding will be fully utilized and the project will be successfully concluded.

Thank you.