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Japan's Tackling Global Issues: COVID-19 Pandemic, Drought Caused by Global Warming, Peacebuilding, and the War in Ukraine

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Introduction

Since 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic assaulted human beings in every corner of the globe, there have been many global crises that threatened the lives of people all over the world—crises that one nation cannot solve alone. We need to have global solutions to these global challenges.

I have had the chance to engage with Japan’s policy makers, who are making efforts to address these global challenges, especially through the activities of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP), the nonpartisan working group of Japanese parliament members. JPFP has 50 years’ history of engaging with policy formulation of the Japanese government and has been actively making policy proposals concerning these global challenges; the first president of JPFP was Nobusuke Kishi, former prime minister of Japan, and the second president was Takeo Fukuda, also former prime minister.¹

Ms. Yoko Kamikawa, who was inaugurated as the 7th president of JPFP at the end of 2019—and became Foreign Minister of Japan in September 2023—has been actively exploring Japan’s role in addressing these challenges; and I had opportunities to support the activities of JPFP as an expert on mediation during armed conflicts, post-conflict peacebuilding, and agendas of human security. This paper discusses the four issues that JPFP and its leadership and I have been tackling together: the COVID-19 pandemic; the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, partially due to drought caused by global warming; peacebuilding in South Sudan; and the war in Ukraine. Although the commitment of one state cannot solve these global problems alone, JPFP and I have been exploring Japan’s potential contributions to global solutions, even on a very modest scale.

1. Japan’s Contribution to a Global Solution to the COVID-19 Pandemic

After being inaugurated as the president of JPFP, Ms. Kamikawa hosted the first JPFP meeting in September 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, and asked me to

present a special lecture on “Coronavirus Pandemic and Human Security: Role of Japan in a Global Solution.”² In this lecture, I urged Japan to make a financial contribution to the COVAX Facility, which had just been established in August 2020 as a global framework to distribute the COVID vaccines to developing countries, at the same level as the EU (EU had already pledged 500 million USD for COVAX at that time); I also recommended that the government of Japan should host an international conference for COVAX, to create momentum for a global solution to the pandemic.

My argument is based on the understanding that there is no solution by one single state to a global pandemic. This point was made clear by Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who published her paper in *Foreign Affairs* in April 2020, "Finding a Vaccine Is Only the First Step: No One Will Be Safe Until the Whole World Is Safe."³ Even if one country is temporarily successful in bringing COVID-19 under control, the virus will return as long as infections keep increasing worldwide and continue its mutations.

Ms. Yoko Kamikawa and Mr. Hitoshi Kikawada, secretary-general of JPPF (he is also a parliament member) immediately forwarded my proposals to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) in Oct 2020; then-Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga and high-ranked officials of MoFA took the proposals seriously. As a result, Prime Minister Suga and Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi co-hosted, with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, an online “global vaccine summit” on 2 June 2021; the summit gathered dozens of member states, who announced their contributions to COVAX. Japan also pledged 800 million USD for COVAX (and contributed this amount by the end of 2021). Due to this summit, COVAX surpassed the goal of 8.3 billion USD to secure 1.8 billion doses, sufficient for 30 percent of the population of the developing countries.⁴

Japan’s commitment made at least one important step to increase the momentum to achieve a global solution to the COVID-19 pandemic. As U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris attended the vaccine summit hosted by Japan in June 2021, President Biden also decided to host a virtual “Global COVID-19 Summit” on 22 September 2021, with more than 100 representatives of states and global institutions, to escalate financial

contributions to COVAX to “vaccinate the world” for “ending the pandemic.”⁵ It is noteworthy that human beings across the globe started restoring some level of normalcy just three years after the beginning of COVID-19, mainly because of the expansion of the vaccines to the world.

2. Addressing the Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan Due to Drought Caused by Global Warming

Following the successful policy proposals on the COVID-19 pandemic, JPFP decided to host a second lecture by the author on “Humanitarian Crisis in Afghanistan and Roles of Japan” on 8 December 2021. In this emergency meeting, responding to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan after the Taliban controlled the entire country in August 2021, the author made five policy recommendations to the parliament members of JPFP:⁶

1. Providing humanitarian assistance to Afghan people as much as possible to sustain their lives;

2. Funding not only UN agencies but also Japanese NGOs that continue to operate in Afghanistan, including Peace Japan Medical Service (PMS), which achieved the irrigation of 23,400 ha agriculture fields in Nangahar province—and more than 1 million people are living in these restored agriculture fields, which once were a desert due to drought caused by global warming starting in 2000 in Afghanistan. The late Dr. Tetsu Nakamura established this irrigation system in Afghanistan, using a Japanese traditional irrigation system that was created 250 years ago in Fukuoka, Japan.

3. Providing support for agricultural and educational sectors as a humanitarian support;

4. Making internal (not public) advice to the U.S. government to remove the blanket financial sanctions against Afghanistan. The UN warned in October 2021 that more

than half of the population (about 23 million Afghan people) were at risk of extreme malnutrition, and several million innocent Afghan people had a risk of dying by starvation.⁷ This humanitarian catastrophe is mainly due to the U.S. unilateral financial sanctions, which froze the financial assets of the Afghan central bank (about 7 billion USD) as well as stopping the financial transactions for Afghanistan, except for humanitarian aid. In addition to the drop in foreign aid and drought in Afghanistan, these financial sanctions crippled the financial system of Afghanistan, as warned by many major media in the U.S.⁸ I argued that the U.S. financial sanctions are contradictory to the aim of the sanctions, which is to protect the human rights of the Afghan people. I also argued that if the Taliban is collapsed by the sanctions, Afghanistan will enter another brutal civil war, and it will be ISIS-K (the Islamic States of Khorasan Province) which will take most of the territory of Afghanistan, as ISIS-K is the second biggest military wing next to the Taliban in Afghanistan. An Afghanistan controlled by ISIS-K which has an agenda to attack foreign countries is the worst-case scenario for the Afghan people, U.S., Japan, and the international community.⁹

5. Hosting an international conference to enhance humanitarian assistance for Afghanistan

I believe that these are concrete policies by which Japan can serve as a global facilitator (promoter of global dialogue on solving global issues together with other states, international organizations, NGOs, and experts), which I have long advocated. After JPPF President Yoko Kamikawa shared my proposals with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, Ms. Kamikawa and JPPF Secretary-General Hitoshi Kikawada met with Minister for Foreign Affairs Yoshimasa Hayashi and Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Seiji Kihara on December 23, 2021 and submitted my five proposals above as their policy recommendations. (I accompanied these meetings to explain the details of the proposals.)¹⁰

After submitting these proposals to Prime Minister Kishida and Foreign Minister Hayashi, JPPF President Kamikawa and Secretary-General Kikawada decided to

establish the Afghan PT (Project Team) in JPFP in August 2022 to maintain the attention and support for Afghanistan, inviting me to engage with Afghan PT as an expert. I delivered a lecture titled “One year has passed since the Taliban took power in Afghanistan: Support that Japan should provide to Afghan people” on 4 August 2022.

Then, Ms. Kamikawa hosted the second Afghan PT in December 2022, inviting me and Dr. Masaru Murakami, President of Peace Japan Medical Service (PMS). Dr. Murakami emphasized that the security conditions had drastically improved across Afghanistan, and that was one of the reasons why PMS was able to work with FAO (Food Agricultural Organization) and JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) to launch the project to expand PMS’s irrigation system to neighboring provinces in Afghanistan. JICA and FAO approached PMS to expand PMS irrigation system across Afghanistan.

In the second Afghan PT, I also reported on my visit to Saudi Arabia in September 2022, including my lecture hosted by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has 57 member states and is headquartered in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Amb. Tariq Ali Bakheet, OIC Assistant Secretary-General and OIC Special Envoy for Afghanistan, hosted and moderated my lecture at OIC in Jeddah on 1 September 2022; I and Amb. Tariq shared the views on the critical need to support suffering Afghan people and to engage with the Taliban de facto government to guarantee access by women to schools and work places. The Japanese government also has a desire to deepen the relationship with OIC; thus, my engagement with OIC was largely welcomed by both members of JPFP and high-ranked officials of MoFA. I also shared my September 2022 meeting with Eng. Mohammad Al-Saati, Special Advisor to the President of Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), which has close relations with OIC in Jeddah; Eng. Alsaati, who is a head of the Afghan Humanitarian Trust Fund in IsDB, also showed a strong interest in collaborating with some Japanese NGOs and JICA.

In order to create momentum for cooperation between OIC, IsDB, and Japan (the Japanese government, NGOs, and JICA), on 30 January 2023 I hosted and moderated an online seminar with Amb. Tariq of OIC, Eng. Alsaati of IsDB, and President Murakami

of PMS, with initial remarks by JPFP Secretary-General Kikawada (Mr. Kikawada also became chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives of Japan), as well as Mr. Shimmura Izuru, Representative of the Government of Japan for OIC and Consul-General of Japan in Jeddah.¹¹ Through presentations by OIC, IsDB, and PMS, the panelists were convinced that they can work together on Afghanistan.

Then, I had a chance to visit Afghanistan as a UNDP Senior Peacebuilding Consultant, from 6 February to 12 February, 2023. I gave three lectures at the UN compound in Kabul and met with top leadership of the UN Assistance Mission for Afghanistan (UNAMA), including Roza Otunbayeva, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan and Head of UNAMA, as well as Ramiz Alakbarov, Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. I found that there was overwhelming support from the UN and the Afghan de facto authority to expand the PMS irrigation system to overcome the drought in Afghanistan as 70 to 80 percent of the Afghan population are living in rural areas as farmers.

JPJF President Kamikawa hosted the third Afghan PT on 16 February 2023, and I and the honorable Professor Makoto Iokibe, who served as an advisor for several Japanese prime ministers, gave lectures and confirmed with JPJF parliament members the need for Japan to take the lead in supporting the Afghan people at this critical juncture. Then, I went to Saudi Arabia in March 2023 and delivered a lecture hosted by the IsDB on possible collaboration to support Afghanistan. I also met Amb. Tariq, OIC Special Envoy for Afghanistan; I invited both Amb. Tariq of OIC and Eng. Alsaati of IsDB to come to Japan for three days' workshop with Japanese NGOs, JICA, MoFA, and JPFP. Sophia University in Tokyo, which I belong to, decided to fund the cost to invite these two key persons to come to Tokyo in the middle of June, 2023.

Accepting the invitation, Amb. Tariq of OIC and Eng. Alsaati of IsDB came to Japan and had an intensive workshop from June 13 to June 15, 2023; they had meetings with 4 Japanese NGOs (PMS, Peace Winds Japan [PWJ], Association for Aid and Relief [AAR], and Karez No Kai) that deliver humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan; they also had a

meeting with JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) and PMS, an individual meeting with PMS, and a meeting with members of JPFP, including JPFP President Kamikawa and JPFP Secretary-General Kikawada (every meeting was organized and moderated by author). Mr. Junichi Yamada, JICA Vice President, and Mr. Kansuke Nagaoka, Japanese Director-General in charge of the Middle East and Africa in MoFA, also hosted dinners with Amb. Tariq of OIC and Eng. Alsaati of IsDB, including myself. I and Sophia University, including Sophia Institute for Human Security and Sophia Institute of International Relations, also hosted a symposium on 14 June 2023, having speakers of Amb. Tariq, Eng. Alsaati, and President Murakami of PMS.¹² Experiencing intensive discussion in person, Amb. Tariq of OIC and Eng. Alsaati of IsDB became convinced that they are ready to work with Japanese NGOs, including PMS, on expanding irrigation projects when all the parties are ready.

One month after three days' workshop in June 2023, on 16 July 2023, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan met His Excellency Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of OIC, in Jeddah during his visit to Saudi Arabia; Prime Minister Kishida and the OIC Secretary-General agreed on future cooperation to support Afghanistan.¹³

Then, on 21 July 2023, the Japanese cabinet approved the official start of the triangle project by PMS, JICA, and FAO to expand PMS irrigation methods to other provinces, such as Kunar Province beyond Nangahar in Afghanistan.¹⁴ It was a historical decision for the government of Japan to launch the project using the established irrigation methods of PMS, after 20 years' hard work and commitment by the late Dr. Tetsu Nakamura and current PMS members, headed by President Murakami of PMS. It was also a huge achievement for the Afghan PT in JPFP, headed by Ms. Yoko Kamikawa, who supports the agenda of aiding vulnerable and starving Afghan people.

On 13 September 2023, due to the shuffling of the Japanese cabinet, Ms. Yoko Kamikawa was appointed as Foreign Minister of Japan by Prime Minister Kishida. I expect that Foreign Minister Kamikawa will keep engaging with global issues, including drought caused by global warming and the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

3. Supporting Mediation and Peacebuilding in South Sudan

I have been conducting academic research on the challenges of peacebuilding in South Sudan since 2016; I was assigned by the foreign minister of Japan (Mr. Taro Kono at that time) to visit South Sudan in March 2019 to make some intellectual contributions to peacebuilding in this fragile new state.¹⁵ I had individual discussions with Mr. Taban Deng Gai, the first vice president of South Sudan at that time; Mr. Martin Lomuro, minister of cabinet affairs; Mr. Yien Tut, minister of higher education; Mr. Ismail Wais, IGAD special envoy for South Sudan; and several leaders of the opposition, civil society, AU, and UN. Based on these discussions, I made a presentation in a subsidiary meeting, together with the South Sudan vice president, which was organized by the Japanese government that hosted the Tokyo International Conference on Africa and Development (TICAD) in August 2019 in Yokohama, Japan; I argued that there were three critical challenges of advancing the peace process in South Sudan: (1) How to realize the unification of different forces, (2) How to create the new transitional government based on the allocation of power defined by the 2018 comprehensive agreement for South Sudan, and (3) How to create a transparent mechanism for the use of oil revenue, the biggest natural resource for South Sudan.¹⁶ Identifying these challenges, I emphasized that “it is time to support South Sudan” to consolidate the peace in that region.¹⁷

Following my visit to South Sudan in 2019, the government of Japan did continue to support South Sudan; in May 2019, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) restarted the construction of the “Freedom Bridge”, which crossed the Nile river. JICA finally completed its construction of this historical bridge in May 2022 after spending 10 years on the construction; Salva Kiir, President of South Sudan, claimed in the ceremony that the South Sudanese people will never forget the support of the Japanese government and Japanese people.¹⁸ JICA also supported the construction of a new water system in Juba, the capital of South Sudan; it was completed in January 2023. More than 400,000 people in Juba have new access to clean drinking water due to this water system, established by JICA. (Until the completion of this water system, there were only 100,000

people in Juba who had access to clean water, mainly from wells, out of a population of 1 million.)¹⁹

The government of South Sudan has also made some progress since 2019: In February 2020, the revitalized transitional government of national unity in South Sudan was finally established, as Dr. Riek Machar, the longtime political rival of President Kiir, returned to Juba as the first vice president of South Sudan, and the transitional cabinet was established by the power-sharing principle that conflicting parties agreed to in the 2018 comprehensive peace accord (President Kiir appointed 20 cabinet members; Vice President Machar appointed 9 members, and other political groups appointed 6).²⁰

As the COVID-19 pandemic was calmed down, I was assigned by Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi to visit South Sudan again in March 2023, and JPPF Secretary-General Hitoshi Kikawada (and chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs in the House of Representatives) strongly supported my visit to South Sudan. I had an hour-long discussion with Dr. Riek Machar, first vice president of South Sudan; Mr. Taban Den Gai, who became a vice president and mediates a relation between President Kiir and Vice President Machar; Mr. Nicholas Haysom, Special Representative of Secretary-General (SRSG) for South Sudan; and Mr. Guang Cong, Deputy SRSG for South Sudan on political affairs. I also delivered lectures in Juba University as well as at the South Sudan Broadcasting Corporation (SSBC) – South Sudan Public TV Station, to share my experiences and expertise on peacebuilding, including the roles of media in peacebuilding in South Sudan.

On 17 March 2023, SSBC broadcast my meeting with Dr. Riek Machar and my lecture at SSBC as a top news in the major English news program from 8 pm on that day. I think it is a reflection of appreciation by South Sudanese people toward the assistance of Japan, which has been very resilient in maintaining support for South Sudan, when major Western donors stopped almost all development assistance after the relapse of the second civil war in 2016, claiming that there is no hope for peace in South Sudan as long as President Kiir and Vice President Machar maintain power²¹. It is noteworthy that

South Sudan's leadership has basically maintained the 2018 power-sharing agreement for the last 5 years.

But the South Sudanese people will face big challenges ahead: stakeholders in South Sudan decided to hold a presidential election at the end of 2024, partially due to the pressure of the international community. But there are so many obstacles that the South Sudan government needs to overcome before holding the election: they need to establish electoral law (as it does not exist yet); they also need to create 10 electoral commissions in 10 different states; they first need to create the constitution, which will become the basis for the electoral law and electoral commissions; and they need to establish a constitutional committee to create the constitution. There is also constant communal violence in rural areas.²²

I observe that it is almost impossible for the South Sudanese government to accomplish these difficult tasks in only one and a half years. And there is a substantial risk that there will be another relapse into conflict if the different parties perceive the election is not fair and free. As losers will lose not only political powers but also access to resources, including oil revenues in South Sudan, ejecting one major party from the government structure as a result of the election can trigger another civil war if the election is perceived as not fair and free. I argue that South Sudan needs to be very careful to not rush to hold the election; it might require more time for South Sudanese institutions to prepare for an election that will be seen as fair and free by the majority of the local population.

I shared these concerns and ideas with many stakeholders of South Sudan; I also shared the fact that Japan spent 30 years before having a parliament after Japan began the modernization of its society and government 150 years ago. It is only South Sudanese people who can make a decision on when they hold the election, but the international community needs to avoid pushing the stakeholders of South Sudan to hold elections before establishing sufficient institutions.

4. Creating Global Momentum to Push Russia to Withdraw Its Force from Ukraine to End the War

Based on accumulated work and field research I conducted in Turkey, Moldova, and Saudi Arabia in the summer of 2022, I published my latest Japanese book, *How Can We End the War in Ukraine? Limit and Potential of Mediation*, on 21 February 2023.²³ I then had a chance to discuss the role of Japan in the war in Ukraine with Foreign Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi of Japan on the TV Program, “Sunday Debate”, broadcast by NHK, Japan Public TV Station, on 26 February 2023; I proposed that although it is difficult for Japan to mediate between Ukraine and Russia to end the war because Japan situated itself as an ally of the Western countries and imposed sanctions against Russia, Japan should play a role as a chair of the G7 countries to approach countries in the Middle East, Africa, and South America and to create a global momentum to push Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine to end the war.²⁴

I emphasized in both the TV program and my book that almost all invasions by powerful states since the end of World War II ended with the withdrawal of forces from the invaded states; thus, the international community should focus on pushing Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine to end this brutal war. I also insisted that Japan should closely coordinate with India, which is the chair of the G20 in 2023, to create a global momentum to push Russia to withdraw its forces, and appeal to the world that G7 will keep its attention and commitment to global challenges. I also claimed that Japan should continue to frame the war in Ukraine as a battle between countries that comply with the fundamental rule of current international order—respecting sovereignty and borders of states—and the countries that do not comply with it; and it should not frame it as a battle between democracy and autocracy, as 55 percent of the states in the world are still nondemocratic regimes.²⁵ It is very unwise to alienate 55 percent of states by identifying them as the same as Russia.

I do not know to what extent my proposal has impacted the actions of the Japanese government; it is true that the government of Japan approached India in the beginning

of March for a bilateral meeting; Prime Minister Kishida visited India to meet Prime Minister Modi on 20 March 2023 and appealed to the world that it is critical for the international community to maintain the fundamental rule of international order, criticizing the invasion by Russia of Ukraine; Prime Minister Kishida emphasized his “adherence to the international order based on the rule of law and enhancing relations with partners in the international community beyond the G7, including those countries referred to as the Global South.”²⁶ Prime Minister Modi of India welcomed the statement by Prime Minister Kishida and agreed to work together as chairs of G7 and G20 to address various challenges that all nations are facing across the globe.²⁷

Then, Prime Minister Kishida hosted a G7 summit in Hiroshima in May 2023. On the third day of the G7 summit, Japan hosted an outreach meeting with G7 leaders, together with leaders of 8 additional states: Australia, Brazil, Comoros (Chair of African Union), Cook Island (Chair of Pacific Islands Forum [PIF]), India (President of G20), Indonesia (Chair of ASEAN), Republic of Korea and Vietnam, as well as Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky.²⁸ The intention was clear: to create a global coalition to maintain the fundamental rule of international order and to push Russia to withdraw its forces from Ukraine.²⁹

Ms. Yoko Kamikawa, President of JPPF, was also passionate about supporting the Ukraine people since the outset of the invasion by Russia; she became the head of “Japan’s initiative to support Ukraine people to overcome a harsh winter of 2022”, supported by JPPF, business circle, and Japanese NGOs.³⁰ The Japan Initiative sent more than 1500 generators to Ukraine. After Ms. Kamikawa was inaugurated as foreign minister of Japan in September 2023, she met Foreign Minister Kureba of Ukraine on 20 September 2023 in New York and emphasized that Japan will keep supporting the Ukraine people to achieve a “lasting peace.”³¹ The government of Japan is currently planning to host a conference for reconstruction of Ukraine in the beginning of 2024.³²

Conclusion

In the last several years, I keep insisting in both my publications and the media that Japan can and should play a role as a “facilitator on global challenges.” Japan alone cannot solve global challenges such as the pandemic, global warming, drought, and military conflicts throughout the world, but it is feasible for Japan to play a leading role in facilitating dialogue between various member states, international organizations, NGOs, and experts so that these actors find a common approach to solve global challenges. One of the backgrounds of this proposal is that Japan has the support and trust of many states in Africa, the Middle East, and South America, as it has never invaded these states, and it has supported self-reliance and stability by empowering people in those states, not imposing specific regimes or governance.³³

Through collaborating with Japanese parliament members, especially members of JPPF headed by Ms. Yoko Kamikawa and Secretary General Hitoshi Kikawada, I made some policy engagement with the government of Japan on the roles of Japan in addressing these global challenges, as described in this paper.

Japan has had some achievement in this role, including hosting the vaccine summit in June 2021, but the question is how Japan can maintain its role as a “facilitator on global challenges” and produce some tangible results, collaborating with other member states, international organizations, and NGOs. I argue that if Japan plays such a role in promoting global common interests for people across the world, Japan will gain more support and popularity in the world; then it will enhance the protection of Japan, as it would be very difficult for a foreign state to invade a state that possesses wider support and trust across the globe.

¹ You may see the leaflet of Japan Parliamentarians Federation on Population in the link below:
https://www.apda.jp/pdf/about_jpfp/jpfpbrochure_jp.pdf

² See in detail, Daisaku Higashi, “Human Security in Tackling the Coronavirus Pandemic: Japan's Role in a Global Solution”, published by Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) on 17 December 2020: <https://www.jiia.or.jp/en/column/2020/12/research-reports-global-issues04.html>

³ Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, *Foreign Affairs*, "Finding a Vaccine Is Only the First Step: No One Will Be Safe Until the Whole World Is Safe," published on 20 April 2020.

⁴ See the article of Washington Post, "Japan gives \$800M to Covid-19 vaccine program," published on 2 June 2021, as well as the article of Japan Times, "Suga Pledges extra \$800M to COVAX," published on 3 June 2021.

⁵ See the White House Statement, "Global COVID-19 Summit: Ending the Pandemic and Building Back Better," published on 24 September 2021: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/global-covid-19-summit-ending-the-pandemic-and-building-back-better/>

⁶ See in detail, Daisaku Higashi, "Humanitarian Crisis after the Collapse of the Afghan Government and Japan's Role," published by Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA) on 5 April 2022: <https://www.jiia.or.jp/en/column/2022/04/global-issues-fy2021-05.html>

⁷ See "Afghanistan: World Food Programme calls for funds as children face 'hunger and starvation'," published on 3 December 2021: <https://www.wfp.org/stories/afghanistan-world-food-programme-calls-funds-children-face-hunger-and-starvation>

⁸ See articles in US media, including New York Times columnist Max Fisher "Is the United States Driving Afghanistan Toward Famine?" (29 October 2021); MSNBC columnist Zeeshan Aleem, "Afghan Hunger Crises is a problem the U.S. can fix." (11 November 2021); New York Times, "A looming hunger catastrophe: In Afghanistan, aid groups fear millions could die, and calls grow to end passages" (7 December 2021).

⁹ See Daisaku Higashi, "Humanitarian Crisis after the Collapse of the Afghan Government and Japan's Role.

¹⁰ Ibid. The policy recommendations by JFPF members on Afghanistan were publicly shared with media in the Japanese.

¹¹ The seminar on "how to advance cooperation between OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation) and Japan on assisting Afghanistan" organized on 30 January 2023 is announced in the link below: <https://dept.sophia.ac.jp/is/ir/information/event/2023/01/6123>

¹² You could see the announcement of the symposium, "How can Japan, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the United Nations work together to advance their support for Afghanistan?" on 14 June 2023 at Sophia University: <https://dept.sophia.ac.jp/is/ir/information/event/2023/05/6308>

¹³ The article by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, “Courtesy Call on Prime Minister Kishida by H.E. Houssein Brahimi, Secretary General, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation,” on 16 July 2023: https://www.mofa.go.jp/me_a/me2/sa/page6e_000374.html

¹⁴ JICA article, “Signing of Grant Agreement for Afghanistan: Contributing to improved agricultural production through irrigation methods practiced by the late Dr. Tetsu Nakamura, in cooperation with the FAO, Peshawar-kai, and the PMS” on 30 August 2023.
https://www.jica.go.jp/english/information/press/2023/20230830_31.html

¹⁵ You may see the result of my research in South Sudan in 2019, in book by Daisaku Higashi, “Inclusivity in Mediation and Peacebuilding: UN, Neighboring States, and Global Powers” (Edward Elgar 2022).

¹⁶ See SIIR Working Paper No.3, Daisaku Higashi, “It Is Time to Support South Sudan” published on 31 August 2019.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ JICA News, “Completion of the Freedom Bridge — South Sudan's Long-awaited Symbol of Peace and Freedom”, published on 3 June 2022:
https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/english/news/field/2022/20220603_11.html

¹⁹ JICA News, “Clean Water as Foundation for Peace: New Water Supply System Changes More Lives in Juba, South Sudan,” published on 12 April 2023:
https://www.jica.go.jp/english/information/topics/2023/20230412_11.html

²⁰ See Higashi, “Inclusivity in Mediation and Peacebuilding: UN, Neighboring States, and Global Powers” (Edward Elgar 2022).

²¹ Author’s numerous discussions with representatives of donors from the western countries from August 2016 to March 2018.

²² Authors discussion with Mr. Nicholas Haysom, SRSG for South Sudan, on 15 March 2023, as well as discussions with Dr. Riek Machar, first vice president of South Sudan on 17 March 2023, and Mr. Taban Deng Gai, vice president of South Sudan on 15 March 2023 in Juba.

²³ Daisaku Higashi, “How Can We End the War in Ukraine: Limit and Potential of Mediation” (Iwanami Shinsho 2023).

²⁴ The minutes of the program, “Sunday Debate: One Year after the Russia invaded Ukraine: Ending the War and Diplomacy of Japan”, broadcast by NHK, Japan Public TV Station on 26 February 2023, is

publicized by NHK in the link:

<https://www.nhk.jp/p/touron/ts/GG149Z2M64/blog/bl/pMlyjkN6AY/bp/pOx8q4yjpO/>

²⁵ *Economist Intelligence*, "Democracy Index 2021," <https://www.eiu.com/n/campaigns/democracy-index-2021/>

²⁶ Article by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, "Japan-India Summit Meeting", published on 20 March 2023: https://www.mofa.go.jp/s_sa/sw/in/page1e_000587.html

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Article by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, "G7 Hiroshima Summit Session 9 : Toward a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous World," on 21 May 2023: <https://www.g7hiroshima.go.jp/en/topics/detail047/>

²⁹ One of the close advisors for Prime Minister Kishida also emphasized this point in the meeting with author in the end of July 2023.

³⁰ See the statement, "Japan initiative to support Ukraine for the winter of 2022 by sending generators" on 5 December 2022 in the Japanese: https://www.keidanren.or.jp/announce/2022/1205_shiryo1.pdf

³¹ Article by Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan, "Japan-Ukraine Foreign Ministers' Meeting", published on 20 September 2023: https://www.mofa.go.jp/erp/c_see/ua/page4e_001480.html

³² Nikkei Newspaper, "Meeting between Foreign Minister Kamikawa and Foreign Minister Kureba of Ukraine: Japan showed its commitment to keep supporting Ukraine," published on 21 September 2023.

³³ I emphasize the role of Japan as a facilitator on global issues, or "global facilitator" in the Japanese in many publications, including one in the book, "Civil Wars and Mediation: How Can We End the Modern Wars" (Chuko Shinsho 2020).