

UPF Tokyo, Japan's 33rd Peace Diplomats Forum at United Nations University

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Tokyo, Japan -- UPF-Japan sponsored the 33rd Peace Diplomats Forum on July 4 at the Elizabeth Rose Conference Hall of the United Nations University. With UN diplomacy as a theme, 41 diplomats from 33 embassies and diplomatic establishments in Japan. Five currently serving ambassadors and three chargé d'affaires as well as 39 other participants that included former National Diet members, UN representatives, former ambassadors of Japan, academics and scholars participated in the forum.

Hon. Yoshinori Ohno, a former minister of defense and a facilitator of the forum, gave the welcoming remarks to open the conference on behalf of UPF-Japan.

After a report of international and domestic activities of UPF-Japan given by Mr. Masayoshi Kajikuri, president of UPF-Japan, Dr. Hideaki Shinoda, professor of the Graduate School of Foreign Studies of Tokyo University and an expert on such topics as the formulation of new policies for peace according to the United Nations, gave a lecture about UN peacekeeping operations and the role of Japan.

Dr. Shinoda first introduced a conceptual framework of UN peace operations and then talked about armed conflict in such places as the Middle East, the Sahel region of Africa, and Southeast Asia, which is becoming ever frequent in recent years. He pointedly explained that the rise in violence is leading to "globalized civil war."

Also, due to the transformation of armed conflict, UN Peacekeeping Operations (PKOs) are facing various challenges, and Dr. Shinoda emphasized that partnerships with regional organizations are crucial. In addition, as Japan's Self Defense Force faces difficulty in deploying troops in overseas missions, he expressed that it is possible for Japan to make other global contributions such as cooperating with nations participating in capacity-building efforts in Africa and PKOs in Asia, as well as providing technical support in supervision and analysis assignments.

In the panel discussion after the lecture, ambassadors of countries dealing with conflict expressed their appreciation for Japan and its global contributions made until now. Amb. Noguyasu Abe, former undersecretary-general of the United Nations for disarmament affairs, raised a point that each country has its own unique role to play as the nature of certain conflict changes and diversified activities will be required after conflicts are resolved.

As the forum came to a close, Ms. Abigail Kwashi, a minister at Ghana's embassy in Tokyo, was newly appointed as an Ambassador for Peace and presented with a letter of appointment by Mr. Kajikuri.