Peace-Building through Capacity Development

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Good morning, everyone. I am Mihoko Kumamoto, head of the UNITAR Hiroshima Office. Before I begin my talk, I would like to express my gratitude to Vice President Sato, Nishida-san, head of the Center, and all the relevant personnel of the Hiroshima University for inviting me. Before discussing peacebuilding in Asia, I would like to briefly introduce you to UNITAR.

Among the various UN organizations, UNITAR specializes in training and research, which means we develop human resources. UNITAR's headquarters is in Geneva, and the two branch offices are in New York and Hiroshima. I will introduce in detail later what the Hiroshima Office is doing in terms of training, but in general the Hiroshima Office performs trainings utilizing the benefits of being located in Hiroshima, as the majority of UNITAR's trainings relate to peace-building. Human development is a vital part of peace-building.

I would like to cover three topics in today's talk. Of course, one is related to Asia, but before I talk about the current situation in Asia, I would like to talk about the global situation relating to peace and security. Next, I would like to talk about UNITAR's training programme for Afghanistan. The UNITAR Hiroshima Office started the Afghanistan Fellowship Programme in 2003. I would like to share with you what Afghans currently think about the situation in their own country. Finally, I would like to talk about what kind of support we have been providing Afghanistan and what we have learned from both the Afghanistan and global situations.

I'll begin with the current global situation. Although there is a lot of data related to peace, today I would like to use the Global Peace Index. The Global Peace Index scores and ranks 163 of the world's countries by evaluating 23 different types of statistics using the basket system. These statistic are related to security and peace, conflicts in neighboring countries, and militarization, such as the military budget relating to weapon purchases.
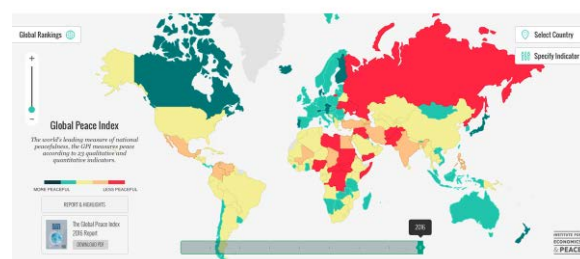

When you look at the data, many things about the world's current situation become clear. I would like to introduce to you the three aspects most important to me. One statistic shows that the world's peace and security situation has declined in the last 10 years. When you look in detail, the most steeply declining areas are the Middle East and Northern Africa. This table shows the 20 countries with the worst security situations; if you look through the list, you can see six countries in Middle East, seven in Africa, and seven from other regions.

This is the rankings on a world map, and you can see the red areas are the worst in terms of peace and security. You can see red in Africa and the Middle East, as well as in Russia, Ukraine, and North Korea. I want to point out that peace and security issues are not limited to the countries where the conflicts are occurring; security issues are international and have an impact on neighboring countries and other regions. One such impact is refugees going to other countries, which I will talk more about later.
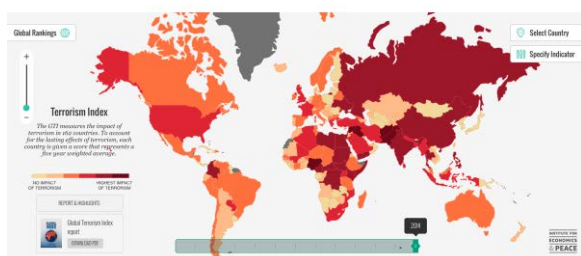
1 World Indicators

2）Increase in Terrorism

- Deaths caused by terrorism increasing rapidly （2.8 times）

The Global Peace Index statistics also refer to terrorism. Here are the number of deaths due to terrorism in 2008, and from 2008 to now the death toll increased 2.5 times.

1 World Indicators

This map shows the terrorism statistics in detail; the darker color shows the worst situation. You can see the five countries where terrorism is concentrated: Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Syria. These five countries constitute 80 percent of terrorist activities. The statistics show that terrorist activities are concentrated in Islamic states, as well as the Boko Haram terrorist activities in Africa. As you can see from how the statistics are mapped, terrorist activities are not contained in one country – the impact spills out into
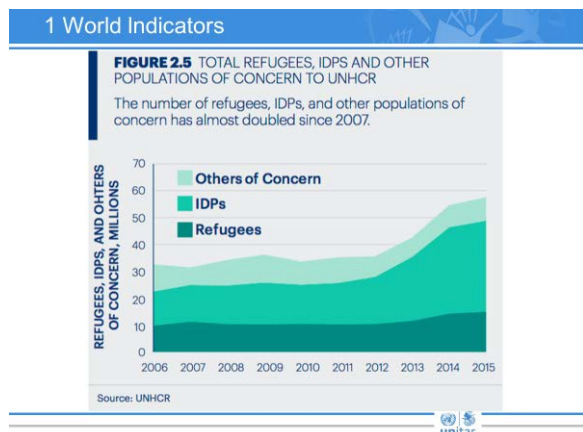
neighboring countries and other regions. You can see the globalization and internationalization of terrorism.

1 World Indicators

3）Number of Refugees Rapidly Increasing

My third point is about refugees; refugee means someone who has fled from their own country to another country. The number of the refugees is rapidly increasing. This statistic, compiled between 2006 and 2015 by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, shows changes in the refugee population. It was only 9.8 million 2006, but in 2015 it was 15 million – that means a 50 percent increase. These statistics also clearly show a dramatic increase in internally displaced persons (IDP), as you see in this chart. In 2006, there were 12 million IDPs; in 2015, that number has increased to 34 million, by 160 percent. You can read the globalization of security and peace issues from this chart as well.
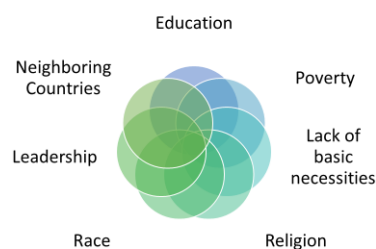
I would like to now focus on Afghanistan. Our office is providing support to Afghanistan, and I would like to share with you some voices from the Afghanistan people. UNITAR has had about 500 people graduate from the Afghanistan Fellowship Programme since it was begun in 2003. I selected 10 graduates from various backgrounds and age groups to share their thoughts with you. But please remember that the information I will share comes from a small sample, and does not represent the whole population. You may remember that Afghanistan was the home nation of the terrorists behind the 9/11 attack on the United States; there was an intervention from the international arena to Afghanistan. We've heard plenty of negative news about Afghanistan in Japan.

One of the questions I asked the AFP graduates was about the root cause of the conflict and violence in Afghanistan. There were seven major answers. One is education; the literacy level is low. Another problem is extreme poverty. There is also corruption and bribery on many levels, political as well as military. Religion is also an issue, and Afghanistan is a multiracial country, so there is a conflict between races. Lack of good leadership is another issue. Afghanistan must also deal with its neighboring countries; it is in an important geopolitical area. Historically, many countries have intervened in Afghanistan, so the people I spoke to answered that intervention from the other countries is another issue.
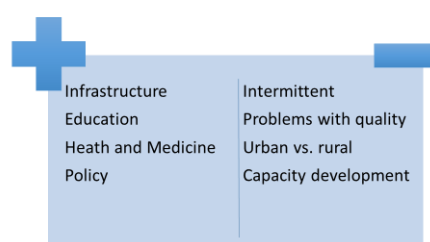
We've heard negative information from the Japanese media, but what are Afghans actually thinking right now? Are they making progress? This is another question I asked. Compared with 2001, what is the situation right now? The answers from the participants in this study said the situation is getting better. Specifically, infrastructure is becoming organized. One answer was interesting: 10 years ago, this person had to use a donkey when they needed to go evaluate a situation for their work, but now there is a road, so they can use a car for the journey. Another person said access to education has improved and the number of children who are going school has increased. Access to the healthcare has also improved; there are many more hospitals and clinics. Governmental and municipal policies are getting better but still need a lot of work. While the respondents said that the situation is improving, it is far from satisfactory. What is lacking right now is that various areas have support, but it is only short-term. Quality is also an issue in terms of the education. Yes, enrollment increased, but the quality of education is still in question. If education in Afghanistan is compared to education quality in other countries, it is much lower quality. As for the issue between the central government and local government, there is a major disparity between the situation in Kabul, the capital, and the situation in local areas. Capacity

development is another issue: Yes, Afghanistan is receiving a lot of support in this area, but it still does not lead to the capacity development of local people. International organizations came to support people from outside, but after they left the people living there just went back to the way they were before.

The third question I asked was if these Afghans knew anyone who joined a terrorist group and why they did. There are four major reasons. One is poverty, unemployment, and having nothing to live on. However, if you belong to a terrorist group, you receive the basic necessities. The second reason is a lack of basic services in Afghanistan. The third reason is injustice and corruption; there is often no justice to correct wrongdoings. The last reason is loss of dignity for various religious and cultural reasons. When foreigners comes into the country, they sometimes disrespect the culture and religion created by Afghans, so Afghans fear losing their dignity. When you look at this, you can understand their despair at the current situation, and in order to

survive, they sometimes rely on violence.
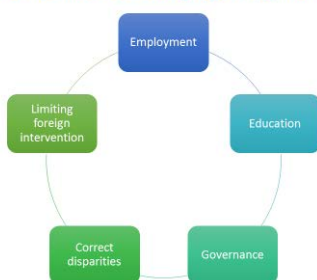
2 Voices from Afghanistan

3) Why turn to terrorism?

- Injustice
- Poverty and Unemployment
- Loss of dignity
- Lack of public services

Finally, I asked them about the necessary steps going forward. Five points emerged: one, employment so people have an economic basis to sustain their livelihood; education should be improved, as well as governance; there should be less disparity between the capital and more rural areas; there should be less intervention by other countries. These are the important aspects the Afghans want to improve.

2 Voices from Afghanistan

4) What is necessary going forward?

- Employment
- Education
- Governance
- Correct disparities
- Limiting foreign intervention

3 UNITAR's Trainings

3 UNITAR's Trainings

Afghanistan Fellowship Programme

· Three workshops in Afghanistan, one workshop in Hiroshima
· Since 2003

To finish, I would like to introduce you to some of the trainings we are conducting in our office. We have three pillars of our trainings. One is peace-building and post conflict recovery. We support Afghanistan, Iraq, and South Sudan and undertake anti-corruption trainings for Sahel countries and countries in North Africa. Another pillar is nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation training. The third pillar is the management and conservation of World Heritage Sites, using the Atomic-bomb Dome and Itsukushima Shrine in Hiroshima as examples to convey the lessons learned to succeeding generations, ultimately promoting sustainable peace through culture and history.

Our Afghanistan Fellowship Programme takes place over a six-month period, during which time we train Fellows, who are Afghan administrators and civil servants, on a set of skills critical to deliver effective basic services to the public. It includes project formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation, leadership, teamwork, gender issues, and analysis of conflict. During the six month, the fellows also develop a project based on a robust needs assessment, using skills gained through the training. After the programme, the fellows will seek potential donors to implement their project.

We invite the Fellows to Hiroshima for one of the Programe's workshops. These are the various courses we offer, with the aim that the participants will build their country by themselves; we support them with the goal that they will become autonomous.

To summarize, I first talked about the current global situation. Unfortunately, the global security situation is declining. I feel it is important that we find the root cause of this decline, identify various players, including United Nations, who can provide support, and design and deliver activities holistically. Depending on the situation, it is sometimes necessary to provide emergency support. However, at the same time long-term support should be developed to eradicate the root causes of threats to peace and security. If the cause is poverty, then it will take time to correct it, so it is necessary to give long-term support.

That is the end of my presentation. Thank you very much.