



On the occasion of the 30th Year Anniversary of the Japanese UN volunteer District Electoral Supervisor, The LATE NAKATA ATSUHITO and Cambodian interpreter Lek Sophiep were killed in an ambush in Kampong Thom, Cambodia in 1993, a conference was organized by the Kyoto Peacebuilding Center, Kyoto University of the Arts and supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the UN Volunteers Programme as well as the Japan Parliamentary Committee of the Diet of Japan for World Federalism at the Kyoto University of the Arts on 5 and 6 April 2023. As part of the conference, Working Group 3 discussed the theme of Nexus between Democracy and Peace.

**Summary of Group 3:  
Nexus between Democracy and Peace**

**Moderator:**

Ms. YANAGISAWA Kae, Former Ambassador to Malawi and Vice President of Japan International Cooperation Agency

**Rapporteur:**

Mr. INOUE Ken, Vice President, Global Peacebuilding Association of Japan, Former Director of Democratic Governance, UN Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste and Japan International Cooperation Agency

**Discussants:**

Mr. KANO Takehiro, Director-General International Peace Cooperation Headquarters of the Prime Minister's Cabinet Office, Government of Japan

Mr. Siddharth CHATTERJEE, UN Resident Coordinator in China

Mr. YOSHIZAKI Tomonori, Vice President for Academic Affairs, National Institute for Defense Studies, Ministry of Defense

Ms. Kanae TANAKA, Legal Research, Analysis, and Formal Justice Sector Liaison – Access to Justice, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Ms. Arbenita SOPAJ, Ph.D., Kobe University

### **Summary:**

Group 3 discussed the Nexus between Peace and Democracy, referring to cases of various countries such as Iraq, Myanmar, Afghanistan, China, North Korea, Singapore, Philippines, Malaysia, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Kosovo. The participants expressed various views, and the discussion was extended to the nexus of peace, democracy, and development. It was noted that the relationship depends on how to define peace, democracy, and development. It was generally agreed that there was no direct positive relationship among them, particularly in the short term, and they may sometimes contradict each other. However, it was also agreed that we should target achieving all these three goals in the long term.

Regarding peace, it was argued that people might think security and stability under an authoritarian regime are better than insecurity under a democratization process, and they may feel happy as long as their livelihood is secured and life is improving. But it was also argued that there is no/little freedom of speech and human rights are often violated under an authoritarian regime. Some people who demand human rights may be arbitrarily arrested or even killed, and we can never say this is a peaceful society where no one is left behind.

Regarding democracy, the importance of local ownership in the democratization process was emphasized, and we agreed that the Western democratic model should not be unilaterally imposed. We should especially understand that elections are sometimes used as a formality to endorse autocracy. There are various types of democracy, and people in each country can and should choose their own democracy. While it takes a long time to build a democratic society catered to the needs of the people, fundamental values of democracy, such as people's sovereignty, human right, and the rule of law, should be considered universal values to be achieved in the long term.

Regarding the role of external actors, the group agreed that the UN and international community should admit that the past approaches in supporting post-conflict countries were not always successful. It was also argued that the effectiveness of the external support depends on the existing human capital and the readiness of the people of the host countries in creating peaceful and democratic societies.

In conclusion, as a suggestion to the UN to achieve both peace and democracy, it was

mentioned that a fragile state after a long conflict should be administered under the transitional authority of the UN, rather than hasty elections and independence. During this transitional period, the UN and international community should support the country in rehabilitating basic infrastructure, building democratic institutions, and raise people's awareness about democracy and elections. Although it may take 5 or more years to form a legitimate government, this may be a shortcut to sustainable peace and democracy after all.