

Human Security - development of the policy #1

(A speech given by Dr. Sadako Ogata at the University of Tokyo in April, 2007)

I am really glad to be invited to give this welcoming lecture for freshmen students today. Since this is the very first lecture for you at the University of Tokyo, I suppose everyone here is really looking forward to it. Although I had such hopeful days like today in the past, I cannot recall them in detail. But, fading memories of very pleasant days do come to mind.

Before the new academic year began, I had been wondering what sort of speech would be useful to you. As mentioned in the introduction, I hope my speech will be of some help to you, so that you will be able to decide in what academic field you will be studying at this university. My academic interests lie in various areas: international political history, international relationship, politics and economics. Yet, what I will talk about today is rather the idea that I want all of you to open your eyes as wide as possible to the world. Because, the world you are seeing right now is full of contradictions. I think there are no simple answers in this world. I assume that until now your single goal in life was to enter a university. You prepared to answer questions on tests and spent your days in serious study. But from now on, and for several years to come, you will rather spend your time facing various challenges and finding new answers. This is because there are no rigid and strict answers in this era of drastic change. When I mention this, some of you might raise the question "How about exams?" I say again that we exist in a world full of contradictions. Moreover, when it comes to Japan, we seemingly enjoy stable lives in the midst of prosperity. In reality, the world which Japan relies on is a form of mutual dependence, and there is no clear answer about what and until when Japan can depend on it. World stability is brought about through mutual dependence and we cannot see how it operates clearly. We cannot feel it in our daily lives.

For example, several days ago, there was a newspaper report on the effects of global warming written by UN experts. According to the report from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change), by 2050 another one billion people will suffer from water shortage caused by global warming. Currently, 1.1 billion people are living in conditions of water-shortage. They say in 2050, one billion people will be added. This suggests that 2.1 billion people will have to live in conditions of water-shortage. What does it mean? We can forecast that food provision, medical treatment, and every event will be influenced in such a situation; but, do we really know the answers of how to deal with it? Will your teachers teach you?? What's more, 20% to 30% of all living things will go extinct. What does it mean to us? There is also the ever-growing danger of increased sea levels and melting

of the world's glaciers. Against droughts and floods, how ready are we for them, and by what kinds of process can we react to them? On the contrary, extremely sophisticated weapons are evolving. But, do we need to develop even more sophisticated weapons to correspond to them? There is something called "suicide bombing", and people react with suicide bombing as the only remedy to their desperate lives. We also know that there are lots of new germs and viruses emerging in this world. Various kinds of medicine are developed, but instead of helping us, they jeopardize our lives. Until recently I had never heard about the adverse effects of the drug, Tamiflu, but such phenomenon now happens in our daily lives with increasing regularity. When we consider all these problems, I feel we are not adequately reacting to the real world of drastic change.