

Keynote Address: haybaMUN II Opening Ceremony

H.E. Kiyoshi Serizawa, Ambassador of Japan to the Sultanate of Oman

Friday, October 9, 2026, 9:00 AM, at IntercityHotel Muscat

Secretary-General Mohamad Hijazi, members of the organizing team, distinguished guests, and above all, the delegates of haybaMUN II.

Assalamu alaykum, and good morning.

It is an honor to be your Guest of Honor. Thank you, Mohamad, and the entire team, for the invitation.

What impresses me most is this: haybaMUN is the first fully student-led Model UN in Oman. Students imagined it, organized it, and built it. Now, in only its second edition, more than 350 young people are in this room. That is not a simulation of leadership, but what true leadership is all about.

This is also a special year for Japan, which marks 70 years since joining the United Nations. So today I would like to share three thoughts with you.

First: be curious about perspectives that are not your own.

You will represent countries that may not be your own. See this as a gift. True understanding begins not only with asking what you think, but also with asking why this nation thinks the way it does. I would like you to try to explain a country's position so well that its own delegate would nod in agreement.

Japan's perspective comes from experience. We are the only country to have suffered atomic bombings in war. Guided by the voices of the *hibakusha*, the survivors, we have made it our mission to work for a world without nuclear weapons, so that such devastation is never repeated.

And we do so through dialogue, not force.

Oman offers a familiar example. The Sultanate is respected for its diplomacy and its role as a trusted bridge between parties who struggle to come to the same negotiating table. This, too, is leadership, built on patience and trust.

Second: the challenges before you are shared challenges.

Let me take two examples, one close to home and another close to your generation.

The first is the sea. Oman has been a seafaring nation for centuries, and its prosperity depends on open waters. A large share of the world's energy passes through the waters around us, including the Strait of Hormuz. When passage becomes uncertain, fuel prices rise, supplies of medicine and fertilizer slow down, and families thousands of kilometers away feel it at their dinner tables. No country can protect this chain alone. Japan imports most of its energy, so we know this well. Together with Gulf partners, including Oman, we are working to make supply more resilient, because resilience is built through partnership, not isolation.

The second is artificial intelligence. Many of you probably used it while preparing for this conference. It can help us learn and create faster than ever, but it can also spread disinformation. Who sets the rules? How do we tell what is true? Technology development advances faster than treaties can be established. Japan launched the Hiroshima AI Process to begin building shared principles. But you are young, and you will live with this technology for far longer than my generation will. So the answers should not be written only by people like me. Perhaps some of those ideas will begin in your committees this weekend.

Both examples teach the same lesson: the solution is not for one side to win, but for many sides to agree. So resist the temptation to "win." The best outcome is one where every side can say, "This is a result I can live with, and help implement."

Third: peace is a practice, and institutions are what we make of them.

At this year's General Assembly, our Prime Minister, Ms. Takaichi, spoke of the United Nations as a vessel, and said that what fills it is up to its Member States. It is a wonderful image for a Model UN. It is easy to say the UN is tired or slow. It is harder, but better, to ask how to make it stronger, including a Security Council that reflects today's world rather than 1945. You may debate exactly that this weekend.

Japan believes disputes are best settled through law and dialogue, and this year we established a dedicated peace mediation unit within our government. But mediation is not only for governments. You can practice it in your own committee room. It starts with simple things: listening before you respond, keeping a respectful tone, and choosing to keep talking even if walking away would seem easier. When a delegate challenges you sharply, or a negotiation stalls, take a breath, ask a question, look for the interest behind the position, and build a bridge.

So let me leave you with this. Be prepared, be open-minded, and be brave enough to seek peace. Disagree respectfully. Compromise wisely. And remember that behind every resolution are real people whose lives you are trying to improve.

I wish you productive debates, new friendships across delegations, and a memorable haybaMUN II.

Thank you very much. Shukran jazilan.