

We would like to share below the inaugural message delivered by Mr. Sonoda to employees of Nippon Steel Trading Group upon his appointment as President.

June 25, 2026

Message from the New President

Hello, everyone. I am Sonoda, and I assumed the position of President today. I look forward to working with all of you.

Last fiscal year, our Company completed the five-year period of its previous Mid- to Long-Term Management Plan, and this fiscal year marks the start of a new five-year phase toward 2030. During the previous five years, in addition to a challenging business environment, we underwent a major change in FY2022 when we became a subsidiary of Nippon Steel. Even under such circumstances, we steadily advanced, achieving record-high profits for four consecutive fiscal years from FY2021 through FY2024, while underlying profit exceeded ¥50.0 billion for three consecutive years. I would like to express my sincere respect and gratitude to former President Nakamura, the management team, all Group employees, and the labor union for their efforts.

Going forward, as President, I will do my utmost to further promote initiatives aimed at achieving the 2030 Mid- to Long-Term Management Plan, including strengthening our business structure, enhancing our earning power, and fostering the growth of the people who support these efforts.

The direction we are to pursue under the 2030 Mid- to Long-Term Management Plan has already been set out. Today, therefore, I would like to focus on what I consider important in bringing this plan to fruition.

Safety, Quality Control and Compliance

First and foremost, I would like to ask each and every one of you to ensure thorough commitment to safety, quality control and compliance. A company cannot exist without the trust of society, and sustainable growth is impossible without that trust. I will share with you a number of thoughts today, but all of them are premised on the thorough observance of safety, quality control and compliance. I know that each of you is already engaged in these efforts in your daily work, but I ask you once again to recognize them as our top priority and continue to address them with the utmost seriousness.

The Ability to Be Chosen

Next, as a trading company, I would like you to further strengthen our ability to be chosen. Go to the front lines. Meet people face to face. Listen to what they say. See what is

happening. Sense what they are expecting. Through this process, identify clearly what challenges they face and what products, services, and solutions they need. Then, working together across divisions as Team Nippon Steel Trading, provide the best possible proposals in a timely manner. That is what matters.

We must respond sincerely to both major issues and small matters. The accumulation of such efforts is what leads people to say, "With Nippon Steel Trading, we can feel at ease," "We would like to work with Nippon Steel Trading," and "We want to grow our business together with Nippon Steel Trading." That is what I mean by the ability to be chosen.

Solving Social Issues

From the past to the present, new demand has emerged from people's desire to solve problems and create greater convenience. Continuing to respond to such needs is what creates the ability to be chosen. And that ability extends beyond the customers right in front of us; it also leads to solving issues facing markets and society.

Responding to customers' challenges and supporting their businesses also means supporting the lives, industries, and society beyond them. Continuing to provide value that is needed by customers and society through our businesses, this is precisely how Nippon Steel Trading contributes to society. I believe that work that helps solve social issues will continue to be needed over the long term and will therefore become sustainable business. Our aim is to achieve both: contributing to society and enabling the Company to continue to grow sustainably.

Our Strengths and Growth Opportunities

I spent the past 36 years working at Nippon Steel Corporation, and during that time I had the opportunity to work with many of you. I am truly pleased that I can now work with you again as President. With that in mind, I would like to share a few thoughts.

Until last fiscal year, as a Nippon Steel Corporation executive responsible for business operations, I worked to strengthen collaboration with our Company and create synergies. Through that experience, I have once again come to recognize that our Company is in an exceptionally strong position.

Nippon Steel Corporation is aiming to regain its position as the world's No. 1 steelmaker through the achievement of the 2030 Mid- to Long-Term Management Plan. As its core trading company, we are in a position—and indeed have a responsibility—to develop and grow as the best possible partner for Nippon Steel Corporation and its Group companies as they execute that strategy. For us, this represents a major opportunity.

Moreover, this opportunity is not limited to the steel business. Nippon Steel Corporation has many strengths, including its brand power and management resources, that can be leveraged for growth across all of our businesses. Building on the strong business

foundation we have developed through steel, each of our four business segments should be able to achieve substantial growth. What is needed to realize that growth is to continue strengthening our ability to be chosen by customers and society.

To that end, there is one thing I would like all of you to keep firmly in mind: there is no need for undue deference, whether inside or outside the Company. Needless to say, courtesy and proper manners are very important. But deference for its own sake creates nothing. It does not enhance competitiveness; in some cases, it may even diminish it. As I said earlier, what matters is being regarded as a company people can trust and with which they want to pursue new business. In other words, we must strengthen our ability to be chosen. The same applies to our stance toward Nippon Steel Corporation.

“Continue, Change, Stop and Start”

As I mentioned earlier, our new five-year plan has only just begun. Five years is more than enough time for major change to occur. During the previous Medium- to Long-Term Management Plan period, we experienced a wide range of changes, including the acceleration of workstyle reform and changes in mindset following the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical developments such as Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and issues in the Middle East, and the energy problems that emerged as a result. These changes had a major impact not only on business, but also on our daily lives.

I believe the next five years will be no different. Given the remarkable evolution of generative AI, even greater changes may come at an even faster pace. In navigating such an era, there is one thing I would very much like all of you to keep in mind: “Continue, Change, Stop and Start.”

First, continue with the approach you have thought through carefully, and see it through. Do not give up easily. Persevere as if you are the last line of defense. However, if results still do not come, then review the situation and change your approach. That requires courage, but it is a decision made after careful thought and determined effort. If things still do not move forward, then make the bold decision to stop. And at the same time, start anew with a fresh perspective or new ideas.

In an era of rapid and significant change, maintaining the status quo can itself lead to decline. I encourage all of you to put “Continue, Change, Stop and Start” into practice and remain firmly focused on results. I believe that the accumulation of such experiences develops individuals, strengthens organizations, and moves our work forward.

Personal Growth and Happiness

From the beginning of his tenure, former President Nakamura repeatedly emphasized that the growth of each individual leads to the growth of the Company. That message resonated with all of you, and as a result, the Company achieved steady growth while also returning

value to employees, creating a true virtuous cycle of growth and reward. I intend to firmly carry on that way of thinking and develop it even further.

Ideally, each individual should find a sense of fulfillment and purpose in work, and through that work feel that they are helping someone and making someone happy. The one is happy, the other person is happy, and everyone is happy. Along that path lies the growth and development of the Company. I believe that personal growth and corporate growth, as well as individual happiness and the happiness of the Company, will continue to go hand in hand.

Closing

Under the 2030 Mid- to Long-Term Management Plan, we are targeting ordinary profit of ¥58.0 billion. We are now building a foundation that will enable us to take on even larger businesses that contribute to society. At the same time, I believe that your capabilities go far beyond where we are today. Let each of us further strengthen our own abilities and let those strong individuals work together as Team Nippon Steel Trading to make this a company that society will continue to need more than ever before.

If we do that, the Company will naturally continue to achieve sustainable growth. As a result, the enjoyment and fulfillment you find in your work will increase, and I believe that your satisfaction in terms of treatment and compensation will also continue to improve.

The target for FY2030, the final year of the 2030 Mid- to Long-Term Management Plan, is ordinary profit of ¥58.0 billion. Beyond that, however, I believe that we are steadily building a foundation that will enable us to aim for ¥100.0 billion.

It is my belief that what we do not envision and aspire to will never be realized. We must set our sights high, then calmly analyze where we stand today and close the gap. That is the essence of work, and it is something I would like to discuss closely with all of you. Let us set our own ceiling. We are capable of doing that.

So that individuals, colleagues, the Company, and society can all become even better and happier, I will stand at the forefront and do my utmost. Starting today, let's work all together.