

**MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. MOTEGI TOSHIMITSU
MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN
ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF
SOLIDARITY WITH THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE**

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I extend, once again, my heartfelt condolences to the family, the Palestinian Authority, and the Palestinian people over the passing of Dr. Saeb Erekat, Secretary-General of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), who made tireless efforts to realize Middle East peace.

On the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, I would like to express my sincere hope for the realization of peace in the Middle East at the earliest possible date when an independent Palestinian state and Israel can co-exist in peace and security.

Japan recognizes the Palestinians' longstanding aspirations for statehood and supports a two-state solution to be achieved through negotiations. To end the chain of hatred that has gripped the region, parties concerned must face each other in earnest and seek a breakthrough. The international community must stand ready to support them by creating an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. To this end, Japan will continue to help the parties build confidence and offer assistance for Palestinians' state-building efforts.

The Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP), a flagship project of the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, has continued now for more than 10 years and the number of participating companies has been increasing year by year. A total of 16 Palestinian companies have begun operations in the Park thus far, creating jobs for Palestinians and contributing to their livelihoods. Japan will keep working to attract more companies to JAIP, especially in the fields of logistics and IT.

Japan has been supporting efforts to build a future independent and self-reliant Palestinian state. In this context, Japan launched the "Conference on Cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD)" in order to utilize the experience of East Asian countries for the development of Palestine. CEAPAD has become a forum where participants share knowledge through substantive discussions. Japan will continue supporting Palestine together with other East Asian countries.

Japan is also determined to continue assisting Palestine through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). With the spread of COVID-19 making the humanitarian situation surrounding Palestine refugees increasingly severe, Japan provided 1.5 million USD to UNRWA earlier this year. In addition, Japan decided to provide food assistance amounting to 4.1 million USD through UNRWA in October. This brings Japan's total contribution to UNRWA in 2020 to approximately 30 million USD. In addition to that, Japan has been providing direct assistance to the Palestinian Authority in various fields. In October, Japan provided assistance amounting to 27 million USD to build schools for the improvement of the educational environment, as well as to improve conditions in refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Japan will further contribute proactively to realizing the stability

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and improvement of public welfare based on human security, which is a pillar of Japan's assistance policy to Palestine.

The Middle East peace process remains a top priority for the international community. Lasting peace and stability in the region cannot be realized without finding a solution to this issue. Japan will remain actively committed both politically and economically to supporting progress in the peace process in cooperation with international partners.