

**MESSAGE FROM H.E. MR. HAYASHI YOSHIMASA
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 would like to express, on the occasion of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, my sincere hope for the realization of Middle East peace at the earliest possible date when an independent Palestinian state and Israel can live side by side in peace and security.

Japan understands the Palestinians' longstanding aspirations for statehood and supports a two-state solution to be achieved through negotiations. Although tensions in Gaza have decreased since the ceasefire was announced in May, the situation on the ground remains worrisome. The parties concerned must halt any activities that would hinder progress towards the realization of a two-state solution. It cannot be achieved through violence but only through negotiations and mutual trust. The international community stands ready to support creating an atmosphere conducive to negotiations. Japan will continue to help the parties build confidence and offer assistance for Palestinians' state-building efforts.

The "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" Initiative, promoted by Japan, has continued now for more than 15 years. At the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park, a flagship project of this initiative, the number of participating companies has been increasing year by year. A total of 18 Palestinian companies are moving in the park thus far, creating jobs for Palestinians and contributing to their wellbeing. In August this year, an inauguration ceremony of the Palestine Business Prosperity Center at JAIP was successfully held. Japan will keep working to attract more companies for JAIP, especially in the fields of logistics and IT. In the same month, Japan has successfully completed "the Project for the Construction of the Protective Shelter and the Presentation of the Great Bath at Hisham's Palace". It is anticipated that this project will assist the development of tourism in Palestine and lead to sustainable economic growth.

Japan is supporting efforts to build a future independent and sustainable Palestinian state. In this context, Japan has launched the "Conference on Cooperation among East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD)" in order to harness the experience of East Asian countries which have succeeded in achieving

economic growth for the development of Palestine. I am pleased that CEAPAD-related meetings and events have been held over the past years, demonstrating that 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 committed to continue supporting the people of Palestine so long as humanitarian and socio-economic challenges remain in Palestine, particularly in Gaza. Japan has extended grant aid of 23 million US dollars to Palestine since this June. This month Japan decided to provide additional grant aid of approximately 9.2 million US dollars to the Palestinian Authority to relieve its fiscal burden. Japan also assists Palestine through the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and has extended 40.8 million US dollars to UNRWA this year. Japan will continue to support UNRWA's work to provide basic services, including healthcare, protection, and livelihood opportunities, for the most vulnerable groups.

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