

PRESS STATEMENT

The Third Ministerial-Level Meeting of the Four-Party Consultative Unit for the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity”

2 July 2008, Tokyo

1. The Third Ministerial-Level Meeting of the Four-Party Consultative Unit for the initiative of the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” was held in Tokyo today. Mr. Masahiko Koumura, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan chaired the meeting with the attendance of Dr. Samir Abdullah, Minister of Planning of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Mr. Gideon Ezra, Minister of Environment Protection of Israel, and Mr. Salaheddin Al-Bashir, Foreign Minister of Jordan.

2. The Four Parties reaffirmed their strong commitment to the initiative, which will contribute to creating a future viable Palestinian state, living in co-existence and co-prosperity with Israel. Mindful of the urgent need to improve daily lives of the Palestinian people and to advance the peace process, the Parties underscored the importance of this initiative, which will bring about tangible improvement through such means as job creation and will build trust among all the Parties, eventually giving the hope for all Parties.

3. At the meeting, the Parties confirmed and welcomed the developments made so far in this initiative and shared common views on the followings:

(1) Site of the Park

The site of the planned Agro-Industrial Park will be started in Area A in Jericho, with the possible extension to adjacent Area in the future. The procurement of the site in part of Area A has already been decided by the PNA. The rest of the procurement will be decided based on the findings of the Feasibility Study (F/S). The F/S on the Agro-Industrial Park Development in the site of both Area A as well as the adjacent area has begun with the full cooperation of the Israeli side.

(2) Development of the Park

The F/S team by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on the Agro-Industrial Park Development has proposed a grand design of the Park and a draft idea of its basic infrastructure. The F/S will be completed in November 2008, and projects to develop the basic infrastructure which benefits the Palestinian people will move into the implementation stage as early as possible in 2009 in close coordination among the PNA, Japan, and possible participants including those from the Palestinian, Israeli and Jordanian private sectors. Mr. Koumura expressed Japan's readiness to extend its Official Development Assistance (ODA) for those projects as appropriate upon a decision to be made among the Four Parties on the grand design of the Park. In parallel, the Parties confirmed their intention to do their utmost to involve international and regional development funds for the development of the Park.

(3) Regional Cooperation and Private-Public Partnership (PPP)

The Parties reaffirmed that regional cooperation is vitally needed to materialize the initiative and confirmed that they will do their utmost to promote it. They also highlighted the importance of the private-public partnership. In this connection, the importance of the ownership of the PNA towards the development of the Palestinian economy was also emphasized. The participation of the Palestinian private sector in the development of the Park will be encouraged.

(4) Access

The Four Parties have been discussing possible access routes from the site to Jordan with full consideration to economic efficiencies as well as security concerns.

(5) Four-Party Agricultural Technical Cooperation

A "Four-Party Agricultural Technical Cooperation" plan for the improvement of agricultural productivity and export in the West Bank has been initiated. Also a high level technical meeting was held in June among the Four Parties with a view to initiating a Regional Program on Technical Cooperation during 2008 and 2010 funded and provided by Israel (MASHAV). All the Parties are expected to contribute to designing a project document focusing on marginal water, small ruminants, marketing and post-harvest, and high value crop to be signed by the relevant Ministries. For this purpose, it was agreed to hold a second meeting for this technical group during the month of July, in order to further discuss the details of this project document.

(6) Japan's Contributions

The Government of Japan has already been implementing several supporting projects such as the rehabilitation of agricultural wells and irrigation systems, agricultural technical assistance projects and the rehabilitation of Jericho-Taybeh road. The Jordanian, the Palestinian and the Israeli delegates expressed their appreciation for Japan's commitment to promote peace and prosperity in this region. Mr. Koumura reiterated Japan's intention to continue providing ODA for such supporting projects.

(7) Other Party's Contributions

The Parties also welcomed other related projects, cooperation and efforts among the Four Parties such as cooperation in the field of water and environment, and the Palestine Investment Conference held in Bethlehem in May 2008, recognizing that these will contribute to the success of the initiative.

4. The Parties shared their views to continue consultations at various levels, and confirmed that the next technical-level meeting will be held in the region in autumn 2008. The Ministers from Israel, Jordan and PNA expressed their appreciation for Japan's efforts as well as their determination to overcome various challenges in order to realize this important initiative.

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