

Statement by State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan H.E. Mr. Yoichi MUTO,  
The Supporting Syria and the Region Conference London, 4 February 2016

I would like to express my sincere respect to the Amir of Kuwait, His Highness Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah; the Federal Chancellor of Germany, Her Excellency Frau Dr. Angela Merkel, the Prime Minister of Norway, Her Excellency Mrs. Erna Solberg; the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Right Honourable David Cameron MP; and Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. BAN Ki-moon for their courageous efforts to hold this Conference.

The international community needs to recognize once again that the crisis in Syria is our own issue. Hundreds of thousands of Syrians have lost their lives, and more than 10 million Syrian people remain in a severe humanitarian situation. An excessive burden on the neighboring countries hosting Syrian people could undermine stability in the region. We have all also witnessed the impact of a huge influx of people to Europe.

Towards the solution of the Syria crisis, Japan strongly supports progress in the political process among the parties concerned, led by Mr. Staffan de Mistura, Special Envoy of UN Secretary General for Syria. However, at this moment, we have to address the plight of the Syrian people and the host countries caused by this protracted crisis.

Japan has already implemented assistance to Syria, Iraq and neighboring countries worth more than 1.2 billion US dollars, including yen loan to Jordan and Turkey, which have been severely affected by the inflow of Syrian refugees. Japan's balanced assistance to both the Syrian refugees and the host communities and countries is gratefully received. In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Japan will extend new assistance of approximately 350 million US dollars to Syria, Iraq and neighboring countries. This 350 million US dollars aid package will be disbursed very soon, and we are determined to continue to provide this kind of assistance.

Japan will implement this new assistance with the following principles, so that it contributes to the future stability of the region:

- First, we aim to prevent certain groups from being marginalized or alienated. Inclusive assistance is key to avoid radicalizing such groups.
- The second principle is to strengthen humanitarian development nexus. It is necessary to give Syrian people hope for their future and, at the same time, to alleviate the burden on the host countries.

I am hoping for the day when the crisis in Syria comes to an end and the people can return to their homeland. Toward that day, human resources to help reconstruct Syria are vital. Japan has been assisting to provide education and educational facilities for refugees. Through our new aid package, Japan will, in cooperation with Syria's neighboring countries hosting the refugees, steadily implement vocational training and other assistance, including those targeting women and young people who are important actors of development.

This year, Japan presides over the G7 and assumes a position of non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. In response to one of the most imminent issues in the international society, Japan intends to play a major role in extending assistance, and also to double its efforts for unity in the international community towards the solution of these challenges.