

**Statement by Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, at Second CEAPAD
Ministerial-Level Conference (CEAPAD II)**

March 1, 2014

Your Excellency, Dr. H. Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, President of the Republic of Indonesia, and Dr. Rami Hamdallah, Palestinian Prime Minister,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation for all the efforts of the government of Indonesia in holding this conference.

"Making use of strengths in Asia to achieve Middle East peace."

This was the first message of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD), which was launched in Tokyo in February last year. The first ministerial-level conference was followed by two meetings on human resources development and private sector development. As such, CEAPAD has made steady progress over the past year. Today, the second ministerial-level conference (CEAPAD II) is being held with the participation of new members. I have renewed my determination to develop CEAPAD further and mobilize capacities in Asia in order to achieve Middle East peace.

The Middle East peace process has also made progress. In July last year, negotiations between the parties concerned were held for the first time in about three years, with the mediation of the United States, and are at a crucial stage. Now is the time for the international community to rise to the challenge of achieving peace. CEAPAD is a timely initiative that could set an example for the world.

Distinguished delegates,

I am recalling the following four points:

First, the issue of Middle East peace, unfortunately, has been a cause for regional conflict for more than half a century.

Secondly, Middle East peace is an issue that strikes a deep chord in the hearts of Muslims, Jews and Christians all over the world.

The third point is that achievement of peace would therefore be the core of regional stability.

Lastly, achieving peace is a global challenge in that it is essential to the stability of the international community. For Asian countries, it is by no means someone else's problem in a distant region.

I think Asian countries take different positions regarding the issue. But I firmly believe participating countries share the common determination to assist in a Palestinian state-building that promises to bring about regional peace and stability. Such assistance will help achieve a "two-state solution," which would see Palestine and Israel in peaceful coexistence and co-prosperity.

The aggregate gross domestic product (GDP) of the participating nations currently accounts for approximately 30% of the global total. The development of human resources in individual countries that supported growth in Asia, as well as the knowledge and experience gained from private-sector development, will certainly contribute to Palestinian state-building.

Distinguished delegates,

Ramallah, nestled in a rugged, precipitous area, and Tel Aviv, a seaside city lined with many high-rise buildings. On my visit to the region in July last year, I saw at firsthand clear disparities and felt once again that filling the gap is indispensable for the firm establishment of peace in the region.

Since the 1993 Oslo Accord, Japan has provided a total of 1.38 billion U.S. dollars for assistance to Palestinians to help the development of a governing system and the livelihood of men, women and children.

In 2012, Japan voted in favor of the United Nations General Assembly resolution to grant non-member observer state status to Palestine.

Last year, I gathered with cabinet ministers from Israel, Palestine and Jordan, and held serious discussions on promoting development in the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative, which aims for economic independence of Palestine. The Jericho Agricultural Industrial Park (JAIP), the flagship project of the initiative, is scheduled to start production around the summer this year. It is expected to create 7,000 new jobs and bring benefits to more than 20,000 people in the future.

All these certainly are examples of efforts to assist in Palestinian state-building and back up a "two-state solution."

Distinguished delegates,

From "discussion" to "action" -- CEAPAD is moving up to the next stage one year after its birth. Japan plans to take the four specific actions, based on discussions held so far at CEAPAD:

- First, Japan will extend the assistance totaling approximately 200 million US dollars. It will start as early as this month with the disbursement of an aid package of some 62 million US dollars including 30 million US dollars for financial assistance to the Palestinian Authority and infrastructure support of about 20 million US dollars.
- Secondly, Japan will support the training of about 1,000 Palestinians over five years, including new trilateral cooperation involving Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand

- Third, a mechanism that makes use of a fund to be established in the Islamic Development Bank, through cooperation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), will be launched, aiming at further promoting support for human resources development in countries participating in CEAPAD.

- Lastly, Japan will extend about 6.2 million US dollars in infrastructure aid and send experts in order to accelerate work to start production in the JAIP. Japan will also send experts.

Distinguished delegates,

It is beyond all doubt that the framework of CEAPAD has huge potential.

"There is CEAPAD in the Middle East peace process."

To demonstrate this to the world, let us bring together our strengths to contribute to economic development in Palestine. Under its policy of making proactive contribution to peace, Japan will continue to take strong leadership in CEAPAD. I am wrapping up my statement by emphasizing my belief that CEAPAD will produce synergistic effects together with the efforts of the international community and make a meaningful contribution to achieving peace in the Middle East.

Thank you so much for your attention.

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