

Joint Statement
The Third Ministerial Meeting
of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries
for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD)
27 June 2018, Bangkok, Thailand

1. The Third Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD III) was held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 27 June 2018, co-chaired by Thailand, Japan and Palestine. The participants expressed high appreciation to Thailand for hosting CEAPAD III.
2. The participants welcomed the Chair's Summary of the CEAPAD Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) held in Jakarta, Indonesia, on 31 May 2018. During the meeting, participating countries of the CEAPAD reviewed their assistance to Palestine and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) since CEAPAD II, and paved ways for the success of CEAPAD III in Bangkok, Thailand.
3. The participants expressed deep concern on the recent development in Palestine and recognized that the situation is a substantial obstacle to the state-building efforts of Palestine as well as peace through the two-State solution. The participants, therefore, voiced their common call for a more constructive environment for the continuation of development in Palestine.
4. The participants emphasized their strong commitment to promoting the CEAPAD initiative, as an effective forum to coordinate the sharing of experiences and knowledge of East Asia with Palestine in support for their socio-economic development endeavors which is conducive to the two-State solution, hoping that this initiative continues to give hope to Palestinians under any circumstances.
5. The participants appreciated the measures carried out to improve CEAPAD mechanism by matching the priority areas and needs of Palestine and East Asian Countries' resources.
6. The participants welcomed Palestine's decision to upgrade its CEAPAD Secretariat function, as a reflection of Palestine's great interest to further benefit from the CEAPAD, in order to enhance coordination of assistance by CEAPAD participants. In this regard, participants expressed their high expectation for the newly established Steering Committee which is led by H.E. Dr. Rami Hamdallah, Prime

Minister of Palestine, and the new Secretariat office in the Palestinian Prime Minister's Office, mainly for the following functions:

- To coordinate with CEAPAD participating countries;
- To coordinate among the relevant Palestinian ministries for effective implementation of assistance from CEAPAD participating countries; and
- To follow-up and monitor the assistance coordinated within framework of CEAPAD.

7. The participants expressed their grave concern about UNRWA's current financial situation, emphasizing UNRWA's important role to offer basic and emergency services to Palestine refugees in the region, thereby functioning as a breakwater to prevent further deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. In addition, the participants decided to continue to support UNRWA, and to seek new ways and means to engage in substantial cooperation with UNRWA, in line with UNRWA's efforts to expand and diversify its donor base.
8. The participants confirmed their commitment to steadily supporting Palestinian development, through implementing the three year plan, focusing cooperation in the fields of water, tourism and antiquities, agriculture, local governance, economic sector including small and medium entrepreneurs (SMEs), vocational training, finance, education, information and communications technology (ICT), public administration, infrastructure, health, empowerment of women, cultural and academic exchange as target areas. In this regard, participants stressed the high potential of the information and communications technology (ICT) sector which can enable Palestinian youth under restricted environment to be connected to the rest of the world.
9. The participants renewed their appreciation for the CEAPAD Facilitation Mechanism (CEAFAM) and discussed ways to make full use of it and called upon CEAPAD participants to allocate financial and in-kind contributions to CEAFAM.
10. The participants welcomed the proposal to carry out a CEAPAD joint tour to Palestine to visit several successful regional cooperation projects including the Jericho Agro-Industrial Park, the flagship project of Japanese "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative and UNRWA refugee camps as well as some success stories of the Islamic Development Bank's (IsDB) Deprived Families Economic Empowerment Programme (DEEP), in order to explore effective ways for future cooperation.

11. The participants shared the common view on the importance of having a clearer modality of CEAPAD initiative and reached consensus on the following points:

- Frequency of CEAPAD meetings

Senior Officials' Meetings (SOM) are to be held every year in Japan to follow up the progress of cooperation. The date of the annual Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) is to be conveyed to participants within a reasonable timeframe so as to allow necessary substantive preparation for the meeting. Ministerial Meetings are to be held every two to three years and the host will be decided in the previous year's Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) based on consultation among participants.

- Participation

A comprehensive study and thorough discussion on the rules of procedure will be carried out to determine the categorization of participants.

12. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to CEAPAD initiative and showed their strong will to produce concrete and tangible results by next CEAPAD Ministerial Meeting.
