

Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. KONO Taro,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan,
at the Special Conference on Peace and Stability
in the Horn of Africa and the Neighboring Region
on August 29, 2019 in Yokohama

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Chair of this special conference, I would like to welcome you all. I especially thank the invaluable presence of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmaajo, President of the Federal Republic of Somalia and H.E. Mr. James Wani Igga, Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan.

Since last year, we have witnessed historical movements initiated by Africa's own initiative, starting off with the peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea. This outstanding deal had a pervasive effect on the relations between Eritrea and Somalia, and dialogues between Eritrea and Djibouti.

We could also welcome the signing of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan.

Furthermore, in Sudan, Japan welcomes the signing of Political Agreement and Constitutional Declaration under the mediation efforts by the African

Union and Ethiopia, the Chair of IGAD. Japan welcomes the attendance of Ms. Ilham Ibrahim Mohamed Ahmed from Sudan at this conference.

I also pay tribute to the roles and efforts of Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya and Djibouti for maintaining peace in the region including protection of refugees. We may also be humbly proud of our long-term efforts which have built a basis for such outstanding phenomenon.

At the outset, let me ask you all to extend our applause to all these efforts and developments by African countries and institutions.

In May, I visited Ethiopia and learnt from Excellency Dr. Abiy about his intensive efforts in domestic reforms. I also visited South Sudan. Excellency Gen. Salva Kiir explained to me how difficult the process toward establishing a transitional government is.

To address such multifaceted challenges the region is facing, we are at the critical juncture to consider a peace dividend. Japan, on its part, is ready to continue assistance to enhance connectivity and peace and stability of the region.

Having said that, I, as the Chair, sincerely expect that, this conference offers an opportunity for all stakeholders to exchange views on the way forward, particularly on how best we address the pressing needs of the region.