

Japan's Foreign Minister Hails Comprehensive Partnership with State of Qatar

Doha, August 22 (QNA) - HE Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi stressed that his country enjoys a comprehensive partnership with the State of Qatar and that they cooperate in different fields.

He added that both countries are determined to develop bilateral cooperation further, especially given they celebrate 50 years on establishing diplomatic relations between one another.

Speaking to Qatar News Agency (QNA), on the occasion of his visit Monday to Doha, His Excellency said that Japan and Qatar have steadily developed their relationship over the past half century, especially in the energy sector, as the stable supply of LNG and oil from Qatar has supported Japan's economic growth for many years. He noted that in the framework of the "Comprehensive Partnership" based on this kind of cooperative relationship, bilateral cooperation is progressing not only in the energy field but also in a wider range of fields.

HE Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs highlighted that the two sides announced the establishment of a "Strategic Dialogue" chaired by the foreign ministers of the two countries, during the visit of HH the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani to Japan in January 2019.

He added that the two countries also signed memoranda of understanding in the fields of economy, commerce, transportation, environment, legal affairs, culture and sports.

His Excellency said that the State of Qatar is a true friend who helped Japan recover in the wake of the Great East Japan Earthquake with an additional supply of 4 million tons of LNG and an assistance of \$100 million in aid.

He added that the State of Qatar is also one of Japan's most trusted LNG suppliers and has been occupying an important position in Japan's energy security. He also noted that Japan on the other hand is also the largest LNG importer for Qatar, and that the strong relationship of trust between Japan and Qatar as trading partners remains unchanged for now or in the future.

His Excellency stressed Japan's support to "Qatar National Vision 2030" by both of the public and private sectors. His Excellency said that the national vision, which emphasizes industrial diversification and human resource development, demonstrates the strong leadership and clear vision of HH the Amir.

He underlined that Japan has expressed its intention to realize carbon neutrality and a carbon-free society by 2050. He added that the goal of moving towards a green society dictates that the two countries expand their cooperation in the areas of energy conservation and clean energy including hydrogen and ammonia, while utilizing LNG, which has a relatively low impact on the environment.

"From this perspective, I am very pleased that the Japanese companies will participate in the first solar power generation project in Qatar, as a symbol of the cooperation between our two countries in new fields. At the same time, we would like to expand our cooperation in the human resource development, and the social and environmental development, with the goal of achieving Qatar National Vision 2030," he said. (MORE)

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On the significance of his visit to the State of Qatar, HE Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Toshimitsu Motegi said that the visit which coincides with the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Qatar and Japan will be an opportunity to start the joint "Strategic Dialogue" for the first time with HE Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, which was agreed to be launched between the leaders of the two countries upon the visit of HH the Amir to Japan in January 2019. He added that it will also be an opportunity to discuss the importance of an international order based on the rule of law and cooperation for regional stability.

He expressed his confidence in this regard that Japan and Qatar will be able to take this opportunity to further deepen their political and security cooperation in addition to the economic aspects, including the stable supply of LNG and the early conclusion of investment agreement.

HE Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs voiced his admiration regarding the progress made to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, describing Qatar as a major sports hub not only for football but also tennis, judo, table tennis, swimming and handball among others.

"I am aware that preparations are steadily progressing toward the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar next year, and Japan will actively contribute to the success of the World Cup by sharing our experiences and knowledge from the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games with Qatar," he said.

He highlighted the achievement of Qatari sports at the Tokyo Olympics, congratulating Qatari athletes for the medals they won, including Mutaz Barshim for winning the gold medal of the high jump competition and Fares Ibrahim, who won the gold medal in the men's weightlifting competition.

His Excellency also spoke of the challenges that faced the world as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying that the whole world was faced with major confusion and economic deterioration. He praised the vaccination campaign in Qatar which saw more than 76 percent of the eligible population (above 12 years old) get inoculated, saying it was a big progress towards ending the pandemic.

He stressed the importance of international cooperation in that regard, highlighting that HE Qatar's Minister of Public Health Dr. Hanan Al Kuwari attended the COVAX Vaccine Summit co-hosted by Japan and Gavi last June. The summit stressed on the importance of ensuring equitable access to safe, effective and quality-assured vaccines for developing countries through the COVAX facility in order to overcome the coronavirus infections. He noted that the summit was able to secure a large amount that exceeded the funding target of \$8.3 billion, including the contributions from Japan and Qatar.

Lastly, he expressed his hope for the close cooperation and partnership between the two countries to continue toward the common challenge of overcoming the spread of the coronavirus infection. (QNA)