

Statement by Ambassador Hiroshi Takahashi
At the London Conference on Afghanistan
4 December 2014

Your Excellency Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chief Executive Officer of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
Your Excellency Mr. Philip Hammond, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my appreciation to the governments of Afghanistan and the United Kingdom for co-hosting and organizing this conference.

Let me first express our deepest condolences for those who have been sacrificed in terrorist attacks in Afghanistan, including the recent suicide attack targeting the vehicle of UK Embassy. These attacks remind us that an unstable security situation in Afghanistan takes a high toll on both the people of Afghanistan and the international community. In no circumstance can any act of terrorism be justified, and we will never yield to such despicable terrorism. We will renew our commitment to support the efforts of the government and people of Afghanistan striving toward the stability of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to congratulate on Afghanistan's first democratic political transition and the induction of Dr. Ashraf Ghani as the President and Dr. Abdullah Abdullah as Chief Executive Officer. From the viewpoint of stability and security of Afghanistan, I expect that the appointment of cabinet members will take place without further delay.

After decades of political and economic turmoil, Afghanistan made a big step towards achievement of self-reliance. In the past thirteen years, there has been a significant progress in economic, social and humanitarian aspects. Building upon such success, the transition from the ISAF to the Resolute Support Mission (RSM) will take place at the end of this year. This means that the government of Afghanistan will assume a greater responsibility

towards its people. I would also like to draw your attention to the great importance of reconciliation with anti-government insurgents in restoring stability and security of Afghanistan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am proud to mention that Japan hosted the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July 2012 and played a leading role in establishing the Tokyo Mutual Accountability Framework (TMAF) for the realization of Afghanistan's self-reliance. In the past two years, Afghanistan and the international community have been following up on the mutual commitments specified in the TMAF. But there have not been adequate results. The new government of Afghanistan needs to get fully on its feet as soon as possible and make full fledged efforts to implement reforms under a strong leadership.

In this context, I would like to commend Afghanistan's reform program entitled "REALIZING SELF-RELIANCE", which sets forth active measures toward drastic reforms. If reform agenda are successfully implemented under new leadership of the new government, Japan is ready to provide assistance as the member of the international community in accordance with the TMAF.

Among new government's reform program, fighting corruption is of paramount importance. Pervasive corruption is undermining confidence in the government and it is acting as an obstacle to a self-reliant development. We expect that the new government will work on eradication of corruption and self-reliant development, in order to restore people's confidence and promote reconciliation. Furthermore, we expect that the new government will make further efforts towards the economic and fiscal sustainability as well as the improvement of the situation surrounding women and children.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Japan has been providing assistance equivalent to approximately 5.4 billion

US dollars since 2001. Out of the commitment that we have made at the Tokyo Conference, which is up to about 3 billion US dollars of assistance in about five years, we have already disbursed more than 2.1 billion US dollars since 2012.

Japan has been supporting Afghanistan's development, focusing on the agricultural sector, infrastructure development and human resource development. Agriculture has the biggest potential for job creation, and its recovery and development will contribute to the reduction of poverty and the realization of a self-reliant economy. I am pleased to note that Japan has recently decided to support the project for "Improving Control of Foot-and-Mouth Disease and other Trans-boundary Animal Diseases." This project is implemented by the FAO, worth 19 million US dollars, and is expected to contribute not only to the promotion of agriculture in Afghanistan but also to the expansion of regional cooperation.

Japan also attaches high importance to the improvement of security, which is a precondition for engagement by the international community. Japan has been assisting Afghanistan in enhancing its security capacity focusing on supporting salaries of the National Police through the Law and Order Trust Fund for Afghanistan (LOTFA).

Last but not least, Japan's support for Afghanistan's efforts towards self-reliant development and reforms is a realization of the policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace" based on the principle of international cooperation which the government of Japan currently promotes. Let me reassure you that Japan will spare no effort to cooperate so that, through Afghan's own efforts and assistance from international community, Afghanistan and the regional countries achieve prosperity together and bring the "Transformation Decade" to a success.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

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