

- Casablanca Declaration -
Joint Statement of the 4th Japan- Arab Economic Forum
for the Development of the Japan- Arab Economic Relationship

4-5 May, 2016

A. Economic relationship between the Arab countries and Japan

1. The fourth Japan-Arab Economic Forum was held in Casablanca, The Kingdom of Morocco during 4-5th of May 2016. The event was held under the patronage of His Majesty King MohammedVI, King of Morocco. “Arab-Japanese multi-layered economic partnership: Cooperation in Development and Innovation” was the theme of this dynamic event. A great number of Ministers and representatives from both the public and private sectors in Japan and the Arab countries participated in the Forum. The Arab side was led by H.E. Mr. Moulay Hafid El Alamy - Minister of Industry, Trade, Investment, and Digital Economy of Morocco, and H.E. Dr. Mohammed Al-Twaijri - Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs in the League of Arab States. The Japanese side was led by H.E. Mr. Motoo Hayashi, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, and H.E. Mr. Yoji Muto, State Minister for Foreign Affairs. Both sides exchanged their views regarding a wide range of economic agenda to strengthen the ongoing relations.
2. On the sad occasion of the earthquake that centered in the Kumamoto Region of Kumamoto Prefecture in April, Arab countries expressed their condolences to the Japanese Government and people. Japan conveyed its heartfelt gratitude to all of the Arab countries for their warm messages of solidarity and showed Japan’s firm determination for the recovery and reconstruction.
3. The Arab countries and Japan emphasized the great importance of the economic relationship between them, and welcomed the fact that it has steadily progressed since the Third Japan-Arab Economic Forum in 2013. Both sides shared the view that economic growth continues to be a basis of sustaining peace and stability in the Arab countries and Japan.
4. The Arab countries expressed their gratitude for the contributions to the economic growth of these countries by Japan. Both sides shared the view that many unexplored opportunities for cooperation towards sustainable economic growth in the Arab countries and Japan still exist.

5. Both sides recognized the importance of energy, including oil and natural gas for economic growth. They shared the view that investment and technology development in the energy sector are an essential basis for a stable economy and development. In particular, both sides emphasized the importance of enhanced cooperation in the field of energy for stable economic activity and energy security.
6. In order to establish a closer and multi-layered economic relationship between the Arab countries and Japan, both sides concurred to promote a wide range of cooperation in the areas of trade and investment, infrastructure development, energy and environment, human resources development, diversification of the economic relationship, and other areas. The Arab countries welcomed new cooperation projects launched by Japan, while expressing their willingness to actively support their effortless implementation.
Both sides expressed the intention to seek to increase the number of Arab countries with which Japan will have concluded negotiation on bilateral investment treaty to more than 10 countries by 2020. Both sides will make utmost efforts, especially by accelerating mutual efforts to aim at the early conclusion of negotiations currently undergoing, and by expansion of negotiating countries.
7. Some Arab countries still retain import restrictions regarding radioactive materials on Japanese products, even though five years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. Accordingly, the Arab countries confirmed that they would exert the utmost efforts to remove the existing import restrictions on Japanese products based on scientific evidence.
8. Both sides recalled the current situation in the Arab region and showed strong solidarity with all people desiring peace in the region. Both sides also highly valued efforts made by Japan and the Arab countries for achieving peace and stability in the region. Both sides emphasized the importance of constructing an inclusive society in Arab countries, and confirmed their intention to continue to provide long-term assistance for the efforts of these countries in the transitional period.
9. The Arab countries expressed their appreciation for Japan's support extended to them, mainly in the fields of political process and governance, human resources development, job creation, and fostering of industries. Both sides decided to further promote government-to-government, government-to-private, and private-to-private cooperation in such fields. In order to fight against extremism, both sides recognized the importance of building a tolerant, vigorous and stable society supported by a large middle class through

these measures.

10. Both sides recognized the importance of contributing to the peace, stability and prosperity in the Arab region and the world.

B. Cooperation for diversification of the economic relationship

11. Taking the importance of energy cooperation into consideration, both sides recognized that it is necessary to further diversify, expand cooperation and networking between industries on both sides, including agriculture, medical and manufacturing industries, innovation sectors and so on. Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced “Exchanges of about 20,000 people through inviting trainees from and sending experts to the Middle Eastern countries over the coming five years” on his visit to the Middle East in 2013. Following this policy, Japanese side expressed its intention to achieve this target by accepting and raising more than 2,000 trainees this year in those government-affiliated organizations which participated in the forum, in order to support development of human resources which will benefit the future leaders in business and public sectors of the Arab countries.
12. Both sides shared the view that development and diversification of domestic industries, which is an urgent challenge for the Arab countries, contribute greatly to their economic growth. Both sides also confirmed the importance of human resources and technology development in order to develop and diversify their domestic industries. The Arab countries welcomed cooperation with Japan in training young people and technology development. They expressed their hope for further contributions through investment and business networking promotion by Japanese companies, towards technology development in the Arab countries.
13. Both sides recognized the importance of promoting foreign direct investment and providing a competitive and transparent business environment, which are indispensable for development of the private sector, on the presumption that development of the private sector, especially the manufacturing sector, is effective not only for economic growth but also for increasing employment.

C. Cooperation in the fields of energy, environment and infrastructure

14. Both sides recognized that the Arab countries play a critical role in supplying oil and that these countries have fulfilled their responsibility in supplying oil to Asia as well as in the global market.
15. Both sides shared the view that the current energy price levels and volatility might hamper investment and add uncertainty to energy markets and global economy. Taking this into consideration, both sides recognized that sustained upstream investments by both private and public sectors are important for sustaining a stable, long-term energy supply and economic growth. Both sides recognized the importance of enhancing beneficial cooperation relationship in the oil and natural gas sector, including upstream oil development.
16. Both sides shared the view that efficient use of energy and utilization of renewable energy are effective path to tackling climate change, in addition to controlling the increase of oil and gas consumption accompanying economic and population growth as well as diversifying energy supply. Both sides welcomed the progress of cooperation in this field in both public and private sectors and emphasized the importance of further strengthening the cooperation. Japan expressed its intention to dispatch a delegation composed of both public and private sectors, to the Arab countries to encourage energy efficiency and investment in the renewable energy sector in these countries.
17. The Arab countries welcomed cooperation with Japanese companies in the development of high-quality infrastructure projects in such fields as electricity and water, and expressed their hopes for further cooperation. Japan expressed an intention to make efforts to implement projects in various areas such as electricity, natural resources and railway sector, worth over 40 billion USD in which Japanese companies are interested, getting supports from Nippon Export and Investment Insurance (NEXI) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). Both sides shared the importance of joint support to such projects.
18. Both sides welcomed that the Kingdom of Morocco will host the 22nd session of the Conference of Parties - COP (22) in Marrakech, November 2016.

D. The way forward

19. Both sides recognized that this forum was essential in realizing the pledge made by the Prime Minister of Japan, Shinzo Abe, during his visit to Egypt on January 18, 2015.

The statement says “*we pledge to continue our efforts to assist in bringing about coexistence and co-prosperity, harmony and tolerance through collaboration and, yes, moderation in the Middle East. To that end we will spare no effort to apply our capabilities and wisdom to the greatest possible extent.*”

Both sides concurred to continue and develop the ongoing cooperation between the Arab countries and Japan at all levels necessary in both public and private sectors.

20. Both sides welcomed the idea of holding the 5th Japan-Arab Economic Forum in Japan 2018.

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