

Joint Statement of
The First Ministerial Meeting of the
Arab- Japan Political Dialogue
League of Arab States Headquarters, Cairo, September 11, 2017

1. The First Ministerial Meeting of the Arab-Japan Political Dialogue took place on September 11, 2017 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States in Cairo, Egypt. The meeting was co-chaired by H.E. Abdelkader Messahel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria (current Presidency of Arab Ministerial Council), and H.E. Taro Kono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, with the participation of Foreign Ministers, heads of delegation of the Arab States and H.E. Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, Secretary General of the League of Arab States.
2. The Ministers welcomed the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Government of Japan and the League of Arab States signed on September 27, 2013 as a more comprehensive institutional framework for political, economic, cultural and educational cooperation. The Ministers affirmed that the Political Dialogue is an important platform for achieving better understanding of regional and international issues of mutual concern. The Ministers discussed recent developments and security environment in the Middle East and East Asia, and stressed the importance of maintaining peace, security and stability in both regions and resolving disputes by peaceful means in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (UN) and the principles of international law. In this respect, the Ministers emphasized the need to deepen political dialogue aimed at coordinating mutual stances in international fora.
3.
 - The Ministers affirmed the need for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, in line with all relevant UN Resolutions and "Land for Peace," while highlighting the strategic importance of the Arab Peace Initiative adopted in 2002.
 - The Ministers affirmed their support for a two-state solution whereby an independent viable and contiguous Palestinian state and Israel live side by side in peace and security on the 1967 lines. To that end, the Ministers called on the international community to work with all relevant stakeholders to end the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian and Arab Territories occupied since 1967. The Ministers called to resolve all permanent status issues, including the Palestinian refugees issue. The Ministers also called to respect the rules of international law, international humanitarian law and international human rights law.
 - The Ministers shared the view that settlement activities by Israel in the West Bank, including in East Jerusalem, are against international law, and constitute a considerable obstacle to a two-state solution and that Israel should fully freeze its settlement policy. In view of this, the Ministers called on Israel

to refrain from any unilateral actions including continued settlement construction in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and comply with the relevant UN Resolutions.

- The Ministers recalled the importance of upholding the historic status quo for the Holy Sites in East Jerusalem, with particular regard to the Hashemite Custodianship of the H.M. King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; and the chairmanship of the Jerusalem Committee by H.M. King Mohammad VI of the Kingdom of Morocco. The Ministers stressed that any action prejudging the city's final status should be denied and any acts of violence or incitement should be refrained from.
 - The Ministers expressed concerns about deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Gaza Strip and called for swift steps to improve the situation, and an end of Israeli closure of people and goods. The Arab Ministers appreciated Japan's contribution to reconstructing the Gaza Strip in general and welcomed its readiness to contribute to resolving the current energy crisis in particular.
 - The Ministers welcomed Palestine's efforts exerted to build and strengthen its institutions for its development as well as the commitment of Palestine to uphold democratic principles and human rights. The Ministers expressed their intentions to continue their political and economic support, so that Palestine will be an independent, democratic, viable and contiguous state. The Ministers called to enable Palestinian construction and social and economic development in all Palestinian territories occupied since 1967.
 - The Arab Ministers welcomed the "Corridor for Peace and Prosperity" initiative and appreciated the tangible progress of Jericho Agro-Industrial Park (JAIP), which marks its tenth anniversary in 2017, as useful means for building confidence among all stakeholders with a view to the regional economic development. The Arab Ministers also welcomed the success in the Senior Officials' Meeting of Conference on the cooperation among the East Asian countries for Palestinian Development (CEAPAD) on February 3, 2016 in Hakone, Japan. In this regard, the Ministers affirmed that they will strengthen cooperation with Asian countries towards the next Ministerial meeting.
4. The Ministers emphasized the importance of preserving the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity and stability of Syria and stressed the need to intensify efforts to find a political solution for the Syrian crisis in order to preserve the lives of Syrians and achieve the aspirations of the Syrian people, according to the Geneva Declaration and relevant UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions, in particular Resolutions 2254 (2015) and 2268 (2016). The Ministers expressed their rejection of military solution and all acts of violence and killings committed against the Syrian people, including those by terrorist groups and organizations. The Ministers affirmed their support for the efforts to achieve peace based on the Geneva process and the Astana negotiations, aimed at military de-escalation, expressed their support to the countries hosting

the Syrian refugees and appealed to the international community to provide all possible support to the host countries.

5. The Ministers emphasized respect for the unity, sovereignty, territorial integrity of the State of Libya, and non-interference in its internal affairs, expressed their grave concern over the security challenges and terrorist threats in Libya and supported efforts to combat terrorism. In this regard, they welcomed the recent announcement of the liberation of Benghazi, after the liberation of Sirte. The Ministers also called for a comprehensive political solution through dialogue and national reconciliation, rejecting the military solution, affirming support to the implementation of the Libyan Political Agreement signed in Skhirat, the Kingdom of Morocco on December 17, 2015, and calling for political and material support to the Presidential Council of the Government of the National Accord. The Ministers praised the efforts of the League of Arab States, the appointment of the Special Representative of the Secretary General of the League of Arab States to Libya and the Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya, and the roles of the UN, Libya's neighboring countries, and the Quartet concerned with supporting Libya which includes the League of Arab States, the UN, the European Union and the African Union, and the African High-Level Special Committee on Libya.
6. The Ministers emphasized the commitment to the unity, sovereignty, security, stability and territorial integrity of Yemen, supporting the legitimate government of Yemen led by President Abd Rabbo Mansour Hadi, the resumption of Yemeni political consultations, and working towards reaching a political solution to the situation in Yemen in accordance with the three references represented by the Gulf Initiative and its Implementation Mechanism, the outcomes of the National Comprehensive Dialogue and relevant UNSC Resolutions, in particular Resolution 2216 (2015). The Ministers also expressed their support for the work of the UN Special Envoy to the Secretary General on Yemen in support of the Yemen transition process. The Ministers shared grave concern over deteriorating humanitarian, health and economic situation in Yemen, called for intensifying the effective humanitarian and medical assistance to the people of Yemen and expressed support for the reconstruction efforts by the legitimate Yemeni Government.
7. The Ministers reaffirmed the commitment to the unity, sovereignty, stability and territorial integrity of Lebanon and called for the full implementation of the relevant UNSC Resolutions including Resolution 1701 (2006). The Ministers emphasized the need of supporting Lebanon, acknowledging the role of the Lebanese Armed forces in confronting the attacks carried out by terrorist groups and organizations. The Ministers supported the need of reducing the burden imposed on Lebanon from hosting 1.5 million Syrian displaced and their safe return to their country.

8. The Ministers reaffirmed commitment to the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Iraq, and non-interference in its internal affairs. The Ministers condemned all acts and crimes of terrorism perpetrated by all terrorist groups, particularly, the terrorist organization Da'esh/ISIL against all people of Iraq, and urged implementation of and commitment to relevant UNSC Resolutions. The Ministers urged the international community to support Iraq in its fight against the terrorist organization Da'esh/ISIL, and to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to achieve stability in liberated areas, especially since Iraq stands at the front line in combating terrorism. The Ministers noted the achievements by all factions of Iraqi armed forces in the fight against terrorism, the most recent of which was the liberation of the city of Mosul from the control of the terrorist organization Da'esh/ISIL.
9. The Ministers emphasized support to all peaceful efforts, including the initiative and endeavors exerted by United Arab Emirates to reach a peaceful solution to the issue of the three Islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, through bilateral negotiations, in accordance with principles of international law and supporting the settlement of this issue according to international legitimacy.
10. The Ministers emphasized the importance that cooperative relations between Arab States and the Islamic Republic of Iran be based on the principles of good-neighborliness, refraining from the use of force or threat of using it, non-interference in internal affairs, respect of independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and of resolving differences through peaceful means, according to the Charter of the UN and the principles of international law.
11. The Ministers welcomed the government of Sudan's ongoing efforts on national reconciliation, particularly the national dialogue initiative launched by President of the Republic of the Sudan under the theme "Sudan for All" aimed at reinforcing peace, security, and stability in the country, and crowned by the formation of the national reconciliation government. The Ministers supported the UNSC Resolution 2363 (2017) on African Union/UN Hybrid operation in Darfur (UNAMID) downsizing and supported the government of Sudan's call for allocating more resources to support development and the course of stability and peace in Darfur. The Ministers supported Sudan's ongoing endeavors for its debt relief and utilization of Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative. The Ministers supported Sudan's efforts to accede to the World Trade Organization (WTO) and welcomed Japan's contribution in this regard. The Ministers welcomed the partial lifting of sanctions by the United States and expressed their hope for its total lifting.
12. The Ministers expressed full commitment to the unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Somalia. The Ministers welcomed the success achieved in the political process and national reconciliation which leads to promoting security and stability in Somalia. The Ministers welcomed the convening of the presidential and legislative elections in Somalia. The Ministers called on the

international community to actively contribute to further strengthening the capacities of the Somali National Army (SNA) and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

13. The Ministers emphasized the importance of resolving territorial and maritime disputes through negotiations and diplomacy, and according to the principles of international law, in order to preserve international peace and security.
14. The Ministers expressed grave concern over the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula. The Ministers condemned the nuclear test conducted by North Korea on September 3, 2017 and the recent ballistic missiles launches, and strongly urged North Korea to immediately fulfill its obligations under relevant UNSC Resolutions, including the recently adopted Resolution 2371 (2017) and the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks, and to take concrete steps towards the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. In this regard, the Ministers emphasized the importance of addressing humanitarian concerns of the international community.
15. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and other Weapons of Mass Destructions (WMDs) underwritten by relevant international conventions. The Ministers expressed their strong support for the prompt implementation of the resolution on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other WMDs in the Middle East adopted by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, recalled the affirmation on this matter in the final documents of the 2000 and 2010 NPT Review Conferences, and stressed that the resolution remains valid until its goals and objectives are achieved. The Ministers reaffirmed the unequivocal undertaking of the nuclear weapon states to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament. The Ministers also shared the recognition on the importance of the early commencement of negotiation on a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices with a view to achieving both disarmament and non-proliferation objectives.
16. The Ministers condemned terrorism in all its forms, manifestations and motives, emphasizing the importance of combating terrorism, uprooting its roots and drying up its sources, and refusing to associate terrorism with any race, religion, nationality or civilization. The Ministers called on states to refrain from providing any form of explicit or implicit support to entities or persons involved in terrorist acts, including the terrorist financing, and to deprive them of any safe havens and to bring them to justice.
17. The Ministers called for an early and comprehensive reform of the UNSC including expansion of both permanent and non-permanent membership.

18. The Arab Ministers appreciated Japan's commitment to providing an assistance package of about 6 billion US dollars for the Arab region between 2016 and 2018.
19. The Foreign Minister of Japan called on the Arab Ministers to consider Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy."
20. The Ministers valued the contributions of the Arab-Japanese Economic Forum in its previous meetings, welcomed the outcomes of its fourth meeting which was held on May 4 and 5, 2016 in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, and emphasized the importance of strengthening economic cooperation in fields of mutual interest, including human resources development, science and technology as well as scientific research.
21. The Ministers stressed the importance of enhancing cooperation between Japan and Arab countries in fields of culture, education and human resources development including through promoting scholarship and fellowship programs, joint research projects, and translation to both Arabic and Japanese languages. The Ministers emphasized the importance of promoting cultural exchange and inter-civilization dialogues, in addition to convening festivals, fairs, exhibitions, training programs, academic seminars and workshops, and exchange of youth between both sides.
22. The Ministers asserted the importance of promoting Japan-Arab Education Partnership, such as the Egypt-Japan Education Partnership (EJEP).
23. The Ministers emphasized the importance of elevating the Arab-Japan Political Dialogue to a strategic level. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States for hosting the first round of this Dialogue on Ministerial level.