

**Speech by H.E. Masahisa Sato,  
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan**

**at the International Conference for Reconstruction of Iraq  
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First, I would like to commend the efforts by Kuwait and Iraq, together with the UN, the World Bank and the EU, to timely hold this conference after the liberation of all Iraqi territories from ISIL.

Since mid 2014, Iraq has fought against terrorism at the forefront with enormous sacrifice, and finally gained a victory. It is time for Iraq to return to its path towards reconstruction undertaken since 2003.

Since 2003, Japan has supported the Iraqis to rebuild their nation in humanitarian assistance and infrastructure reconstruction. And I myself was engaged in the reconstruction operations as a Japanese Self Defense Forces commander. Our total assistance to Iraq since 2003 exceeded 15 billion US dollars including debt reduction.

A major challenge is providing support to refugees and IDPs in Iraq. Therefore, Japan will provide humanitarian and stabilization assistance of about 100 million US dollars through international organizations in 2018.

Japan will continue support in infrastructure reconstruction through new and ongoing ODA loans in electricity, water, oil and others. To help stabilize the Iraqi economy, Japan will also fulfill our pledge of financial support worth 500 million US dollars through ODA loans, as announced at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit in 2016.

Attracting private funds is also important. Japan will support Iraqi reconstruction through introduction of high-quality infrastructure by utilizing scheme of Japan Bank for International Cooperation. The implementation began last year.

To better link these public and private engagements to great achievement, it is indispensable to create a foundation. First, security has to be maintained. Japan believes that collection of weapons spreading across the society is important. From this point, Japan will cooperate with the Iraqis in creating a mechanism to promote voluntary submission of arms by providing vocational training. In this regard, Japan plans to hold an international conference in Tokyo.

A solid determination of the Iraqis to work together, regardless of their religion or ethnicity, is crucial.

The unity of the Iraqis in the fight against ISIL proved that any hardship can be overcome if they work together. I am confident that this unity will help Iraq to achieve economic reform and eradication of corruption. Economic reform is indispensable for attracting private investment from abroad. It is a key for reconstruction.

I sincerely hope that Iraq will be a messenger of peace as a country that has achieved reconstruction.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.