

**Statement by H.E.Mr. Masahisa Sato**  
**State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan**  
**At the Geneva Conference on Afghanistan (November 28, 2018)**

On behalf of the Government of Japan, I would like to express my gratitude to the United Nations and the government of Afghanistan for co-hosting and organizing this important conference.

Let me first pay our deepest respect to the citizens of Afghanistan for their determination and courage in casting their votes at the parliamentary elections last month in the face of difficult security situation. I would also like to take this opportunity to offer our sincere condolences to the victims of the terrorist attacks and the bereaved families.

Free and fair elections are the backbone of democracy. We expect the Afghan Government to address and overcome the challenges surfaced in the recent elections and to take every possible measure for a free, fair, and transparent presidential election scheduled next April.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Although significant progress has been made since the Brussels Conference, Afghanistan still faces many challenges. Improving security is one of them. The progress on peace and reconciliation process contributes to its improvement and, on this note, Japan welcomes the first-ever ceasefire this June and will continue to support Afghan-led and Afghan owned peace process. Fighting corruption and good governance is another challenge, and Japan urges the Afghan government to take further measures to demonstrate progress.

Japan highly appreciates the active role the Special Representative Tadamichi Yamamoto of UNAMA and his team are playing to support the undertakings of Afghan government as well as to lead and coordinate the international efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Japan is resolved to support Afghanistan's effort to overcome the challenges.

I would like to announce that Japan has decided to extend the new assistance of 13 million US dollars in response to the devastating drought in Afghanistan.

Moreover, understanding agricultural sector and rural development as the key sectors for Afghanistan's development and enhancing resilience to the draughts, Japan provided approximately 15 million US dollars this year to improve irrigation infrastructure and water management. Also, approximately 17 million US dollar assistance was approved to promote Maternal and Child Health Handbook and to provide immunization against infectious diseases, including polio. I believe such projects will contribute to saving lives of the Afghan children who will lead Afghanistan in the future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mutual accountability is the principle on which the partnership between the international community and Afghanistan is based. In this context Japan welcomes the formulation of the Geneva Mutual Accountability Framework (GMAF).

We are at an important and decisive juncture as we reach a halfway point of the Transformation Decade. We should build on what has already been achieved, and Japan stands ready to discuss with the international community a way forward for Afghanistan to become truly self-reliant.

Thank you for your kind attention.