

Statement by H.E. Mr. KONO Taro,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the Special Conference on Peace and Stability
in the Sahel Region
August 28, 2019 in Yokohama

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome my African and G7 colleagues and representatives from international organizations to this meeting. At this Special Conference, we would like to discuss how we can ensure peace and stability in the Sahel region by enhancing both Africa's own efforts and international cooperation.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to H.E. Mr. Smail Chergui, AU Commissioner of the African Union, for co-chairing this conference. Japan and the AUC have been working together on various projects in the Sahel and in Africa through the AU Peace Fund, such as the ongoing hospital project in northern Burkina Faso.

Excellencies,

The structure of the Sahel issue is two-fold: first, the fight

against terrorism and second, regional development. On the former, the G5 Sahel Joint Force and other international forces with counter-terrorism mandates are actively engaged even though they have faced many difficulties, such as the terrorist attack against the Headquarters of the G5 Sahel Joint Force last year. MINUSMA has also been playing a pivotal role in stabilizing Mali, including through supporting the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Mali and the protection of civilians despite the frequent attacks against MINUSMA peacekeepers. I would like to express my sincere condolences to the victims and bereaved families, and to pay tribute to all parties concerned for their tireless efforts on the ground.

On the latter, there is a growing notion that development of the region helps us prevail over terrorists and expand governance to rural areas, including the Lake Chad Region. G7 foreign ministers in April and G7 leaders a few days ago have agreed upon the “Sahel Partnership Action Plan” which has an intensive focus on the economic aspect, including sources of funding for terrorists, macro-economic resilience, education and health. Japan sincerely appreciates

the French G7 chairmanship. The discussions I myself joined in Dinard, France, and other communications with African and European friends prompted Japan to articulate its commitment to the Sahel. As a first step, Japan joined the “Sahel Alliance” last June as an observer.

In close consultation with African and international partners, Japan has decided to provide the following assistance:

First, recognizing that institution building is a central element in nation-building, Japan will focus on human resource development for judicial, administrative and legislative institutions at national and regional levels. To this end, Japan will provide training to 1,000 people from G5 Sahel countries over a three-year period.

Second, Japan will provide vocational training and education opportunities for youth and other generations. For example, Japan has been providing comprehensive support to improve the quality and access of children’s education in Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso through the active participation of parents, teachers and communities.

Third, Japan will foster the development of human resources for PKO through the “Ecole de Maintien de la Paix Alioune Blondin BEYE de Bamako” (EMPABB) and improve the capacity of the government, the police and airports by providing equipment for security measures to Mali, Chad, Burkina Faso and Mauritania.

Fourth, Japan will continue to help refugees, IDPs and their host communities, including in the medical sector, in the context of the humanitarian and development nexus. In March, Japan disbursed 23 million USD to G5 Sahel Countries mainly for humanitarian services.

In closing, I hope this Special Conference will offer an opportunity for all the stakeholders to find better ways toward a more synergized and coordinated approach to tackle the complex issues in the Sahel region.

Thank you for your attention.