

Statement by Mr. HONDA Taro, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the AHLC Ministerial meeting in Oslo, Norway

17 November 2021

My name is HONDA Taro, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Her Excellency, Ms. Anniken Huitfeldt, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Norway, for taking the initiative to hold this AHLC Ministerial meeting.

Israel and Palestine have gone through several events with significant impact this year, such as clashes between Palestinian militants including Hamas and Israel in Gaza in May and the formation of a new Israeli government in June. In this context, Mr. MOTEGI Toshimitsu, then Japanese Foreign Minister, urged both sides to take concrete measures to ease the tension and restore confidence during his visit in August.

Japan highly values recent efforts of both sides including dialogues between Israeli and Palestinian officials, which contribute to improving their relationship. Japan would like to support such momentum in cooperation with the international community, while strongly inviting the two parties to take further constructive measures.

Against this backdrop, Japan expresses deep concern over the continued settlement activities including decisions made by the Government of Israel last month on construction of housing units and eviction of the Palestinian residents from their homes. Such actions undermine the viability of a “two-state solution” as supported by the international community including Japan. We are also concerned about clashes between the settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank, as it would lead to recurrence of tensions.

At the same time, we would like to point out that, in order to revitalize the Palestinian economy, it is vital for the Palestinian Authority to tackle numerous challenges including through cooperation with Israel. It is also important to increase efforts, including, inter alia, renunciation of violence by the Hamas and other Palestinian militants, toward Palestinian national reconciliation.

Japan has provided more than 23 million US dollars for supporting Gaza in various fields such as foodstuff, debris removal, WASH, healthcare and public health, and for providing cold chain equipment and food assistance via UNRWA after the clash in May.

Japan will continue to play an active role in supporting Palestine and its people.

Japan will also continue to advance the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” initiative and other efforts, aiming at building self-reliant economy of Palestine and the strengthening of PA’s financial base.

We do hope that today’s meeting will reinforce the solidarity of the international community towards realizing peace in the Middle East through a “two-state solution”.

Thank you for your attention.

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