

Towards the Next 50 Years between Japan and UAE

By KISHIDA Fumio, Prime Minister of Japan

ABU DHABI, 16th July, 2023 (WAM) -- I am greatly pleased to have this opportunity to visit the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a strategic partner of Japan, for the first time since assuming the post of Prime Minister.

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the UAE. Looking back, Japanese companies have been involved in the development of oil industries in Abu Dhabi since the 1960s, and the secure energy supply from the UAE has supported Japan's economic growth for many years. Since the 1990s, many Japanese companies have contributed to the building of the UAE's key infrastructure, including the construction and operation of the Dubai Metro and seawater desalination plants.

The UAE has the largest number, in the Middle East and Africa, of Japanese expatriates (approximately 4,500) and Japanese companies (approximately 340). The UAE's role and importance as a hub of, and gateway to, the region is growing every year. At the same time, cooperation between Japan and the UAE has expanded far beyond traditional areas such as energy and economy, to include a wide range of fields such as climate change, education, science and technology, outer space, and defense. Our cooperation is being broadened and deepened not only in the Middle East region but also in Africa, and in the international arena. In order to further advance such multifaceted cooperation, our two countries signed the Joint Declaration on the Implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Initiative (CSPI) last September, under which concrete discussions are underway.

Let me mention some of the examples. In the field of education, Japan will further support exchanges between our youths, who will shape the future of our countries, and will strengthen our support for the development of human resources in the UAE. To this end, Japan continues to work with the UAE to promote studying in Japan of Emirati undergraduate and graduate students, exchange of high school students between the two countries, and acceptance of young Emirati nationals in internship programs offered by Japanese companies. I believe that such educational exchanges and support for human resource development will serve to consolidate the foundation of our bilateral relations for further development towards the future in a variety of fields, including the economic and business fields.

In the field of culture, we have renewed our recognition of keen interest of the people in the UAE in Japan through various events held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. The fact that the Japan Pavilion was one of the most popular pavilions at the Dubai Expo is a testament to this. The youth in the UAE have shown strong interest in the Japanese culture and Japanese language, with many starting from interest in manga and anime. We will continue to expand our support for Japanese language education, as well as to promote exchanges in the content and creative industries, including e-sports.

In the field of tourism, the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) opened its MENA headquarters office in Dubai in November 2021. We hope that, encouraged by the full visa exemption for UAE citizens introduced in November 2021, an ever-growing number of UAE citizens will visit Japan and discover the appeals of Japan by enjoying authentic Washoku (Japanese food), viewing changing scenery of the four distinct seasons, experiencing the excitement of social infrastructure such as the renowned “bullet trains”(Shinkansen).

Our bilateral relationship is also expanding in the field of space cooperation. Japan has contributed to the UAE's space policy for many years. The launch of the UAE's first domestically-manufactured satellite KhalifaSat in 2018 and the Mars Exploration Hope Probe in 2020 were both carried out by Japanese H2-A rockets. The launch of the UAE's lunar probe Rashid Rover this April, operated in collaboration with Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRSC) and Japanese space startup company, ispace, was a significant step forward as the world's first attempt by a private company to land a moon-surface rover. I am confident that future-oriented efforts such as this will lead to a greater success in the near future. Japan is determined to continue its support for further collaboration in the space field.

The UAE is hosting the COP28 in November this year. The UAE was the first country in the Middle East to declare net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, and as a major energy exporting country, Japan holds the UAE in high esteem as the UAE works responsibly to ensure global energy security and makes proactive efforts to address climate change issues. Japan will work closely with the UAE towards the success of COP28.

In addition, I am planning to propose the initiative "Global Green Energy Hub" also during my visit. This initiative intends to combine the respective strengths of our two countries: the geographical advantages, low-cost renewable energy resources and strong investment capacities of the UAE and the Middle East on one hand; and the cutting-edge decarbonization technologies of Japan on the other. By fully utilizing these strengths of both countries, we can together turn the Middle East into a global hub in the supply chain of the next-generation fuels and mineral resources. Under this initiative, both countries will be well placed to collaborate in the related fields of hydrogen and ammonia production and utilization as well as carbon recycling by a multilayered approach.

It is also extremely important to accelerate innovation, including in the area of decarbonization, toward and beyond COP28. For this purpose, Japan intends to propose a "Japan-UAE Innovation Partnership." While welcoming the progress in collaboration on decarbonization technologies through the Japan-UAE Coordination Scheme for Advanced Technology (JUCAT) established in January this year, Japan is willing to establish an enlarged framework for industrial collaboration with the UAE. In particular, Japan will make greater efforts to support an expanded flow of FDI into Japan and semiconductor industry with a view to an increased resilience of global supply chain of semiconductors.

Japan and the UAE are together on the Security Council of the United Nations this year as non-permanent members. In the G7 Hiroshima Summit hosted by Japan this year, it was confirmed that all countries should abide by the principles enshrined in the UN Charter such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity. Japan is also promoting the vision of the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific," under which it is envisaged to uphold and strengthen a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific region and to achieve regional and global peace, stability and prosperity. Towards the goal of this vision Japan is cooperating with all the countries without excluding any, and it is Japan's strong wish that it can closely work with the UAE in this regard as the UAE also attaches a great importance to the rule of law and tolerance. Looking back on the history of our bilateral relationship since its establishment, I am overwhelmed by a great potential for further cooperation ahead of our two countries. Heading for the next 50 years, I am determined to work with His Highness the President [Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan](#) to make this potential a reality. I am wholeheartedly looking forward to discussing ways to further strengthen our bilateral relationship with His Highness the President and the people of the UAE during my upcoming visit.