

**Article by H.E. Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan for
Qatar News Agency**

July 18, 2023

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to visit the State of Qatar, an important partner to Japan, for the first time since taking office as Prime Minister.

Over the past half century, Japan and Qatar have steadily developed their relationship not only in the energy sector but also in various fields. For many years, the stable supply of LNG and oil from Qatar has supported Japan's economic growth, allowing Japan and Qatar to steadily develop a mutually beneficial relationship. Since the 1990s, Japanese companies have contributed to the full-scale construction of LNG plants in Qatar, and in February 2021, a Japanese company was awarded a contract to develop and construct LNG plants in the North Field Expansion Project, which is seen as the cornerstone of Qatar's prosperity. Furthermore, Japanese companies have contributed to the construction of key infrastructure in Qatar, such as the construction of the Doha Metro and Hamad International Airport. I am very pleased that Japanese high-tech companies continue to contribute to the further development of Qatar.

Moreover, we will never forget Qatar's generous assistance during the March 11, 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, which included an additional supply of 4 million tons of LNG and \$100 million in support funds. On top of that, the Qatari government has provided us with enormous assistance in a variety of situations, including the evacuation of Japanese nationals and local staffs from Afghanistan and Qatar Airways' cooperation in the repatriation of Japanese citizens from Russia. These acts symbolize the profound friendship our two countries share.

In October 2020, Japan announced its goal to achieve a carbon-neutral and decarbonized society by 2050. As the global movement

toward the realization of a green society accelerates, it is important to expand cooperation between our two countries in the field of clean energy, including energy conservation, hydrogen and ammonia, while utilizing LNG, which is an energy source with a relatively low environmental impact. In this respect, I am very delighted that a Japanese company is participating in the first large-scale solar power generating project in Qatar as part of the two countries' cooperation in the field of clean energy.

On the other hand, it is extremely important for the two countries to work more closely to stabilize the global LNG market, which is experiencing tight supply and demand. Moreover, I am very pleased that Japan is hosting the LNG Producer-Consumer Conference 2023 in Tokyo at the same time as my visit to Qatar, in order to promote gas security and clean LNG utilization to the world as president of the G7.

In this way, despite their geographical distance, Japan and Qatar have been able to deepen their ties in a favorable and stable way over the years, owing to the fact that the Indo-Pacific region, to which both countries belong, has defended and protected a free and open international order based on the rule of law, despite facing numerous challenges. It was also confirmed at the G7 Hiroshima Summit hosted by Japan this May, that all countries should observe the principles of the United Nations Charter, such as respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Japan, maintains and strengthens a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific and advocates the vision of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" to achieve peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the world. To realize this vision, we are cooperating with all countries without excluding any, but we would especially like to work closely with Qatar, a country that also values the rule of law.

Today, the relationship between Japan and Qatar extends beyond

energy. During H.H. Sheikh Tamim's visit to Japan in January 2019, the leaders of the two countries declared the establishment of the "Strategic Dialogue" between the foreign ministers and confirmed that the two sides further strengthen their ties.

Under this framework, we hold with the Qatari side discussion on the exchanges and cooperation in a wide range of fields, not limited to the energy field. We also exchange our views on Middle Eastern Affairs including Gulf affairs, peace in the Middle East and Iran, and East Asian affairs such as China and North Korea. I intend to closely work, on the international stage, with Qatar which plays a vital role in easing tensions and stabilizing the situation in the international community, including the situation in Afghanistan.

In addition, Japan attaches great importance to the "Qatar National Vision 2030" which promotes industrial diversification and human resource development, and we will continue to cooperate with Qatar towards its realization. This vision exemplifies H.H. Sheikh Tamim's strong leadership and clear vision, and its success is extremely important not only for Qatar, but also for the prosperity and stability of the Middle East region as a whole.

Looking back on our bilateral relationship over the past half century, I see an even greater potential for cooperation between our two countries. Over the next 50 years, I would like to work with H.H. Sheikh Tamim to turn this possibilities into a reality. I am looking forward to discussing ways to further strengthen bilateral relations with H.H. Sheikh Tamim and the Qatari people during my upcoming visit to the State of Qatar.

Prime Minister of Japan
Fumio Kishida