

Joint Statement
on the Occasion of the State Visit
by H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah,
Amir of the State of Kuwait to Japan
from March 20 to 23, 2012

(Overview)

1. H.H. Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait, paid a state visit to Japan from March 20 to 23, 2012, leading a high level delegation upon invitation of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan. Recalling that the year 2011 was the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Japan-Kuwait diplomatic relations, this visit further strengthened the friendly, cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship between the two countries.
2. On March 22, H.H. Sheikh Sabah met with H.E. Mr. Yoshihiko Noda, Prime Minister of Japan, and they reaffirmed the importance of further enhancing bilateral cooperation. Prime Minister Noda highly valued the progress in the democratic process in Kuwait since the establishment of the National Assembly in 1963, and welcomed the holding of its 14th general election in February 2012 in a transparent and peaceful manner. The Japanese side reaffirmed its strong support for Kuwait's efforts as a forerunner of more open and democratic society in the region. Both sides reaffirmed their intention to continue working together towards a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Middle East.
3. Prime Minister Noda expressed his profound gratitude for Kuwait's donation of 5 million barrels of crude oil to Japan extended after the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, as well as for the additional donation from H.H. Sheikh Sabah of 3 million dollars for the rehabilitation of Aquamarine Fukushima, and of 2 million dollars for Japan Red Cross for the victims in Fukushima. H.H. Sheikh Sabah reiterated his sincere condolences to the victims and their bereaved families, while expressing his confidence in Japan's swift and full recovery. Prime Minister Noda explained Japan's efforts for accelerating "open reconstruction" and its measures to ensure the safety of its food products. He reiterated Japan's commitment to continuing to provide the necessary information in a timely manner, including that related to the current radioactivity levels in the affected areas. The Kuwaiti side pledged to lift its restrictions on food imports from Japan.
4. Both sides stressed the importance of cooperation in the field of nuclear safety through sharing Japan's experience and lessons learnt from the accident at Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station of Tokyo Electric Power Company with Kuwait.

5. H.H. Sheikh Sabah expressed his deep appreciation, on behalf of the Government of the State of Kuwait, for Japan's support for the reconstruction of Kuwait in the aftermath of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in the 1990s, including its financial assistance. Prime Minister Noda expressed his appreciation to Kuwait for having facilitated the air transport mission of Japan Self-Defense Forces in Kuwait from 2004 to 2008 for the purpose of humanitarian assistance to Iraq.

(Business Environment)

6. Both sides stressed the importance of strengthening bilateral economic and technical cooperation, and expressed their commitment to working together to further promote trade, investment and business between the two countries. In this regard, both sides welcomed the signing of the Agreement between Japan and the State of Kuwait for the Promotion and Protection of Investment on March 22, 2012.

7. The Kuwaiti side committed to making its utmost efforts for an early entry into force of the Convention between Japan and the State of Kuwait for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income.

8. Both sides reaffirmed their intention to work together to resume the negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement between Japan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states in 2012, and to closely cooperate towards its early conclusion.

9. Both sides welcomed the holding of annual Japan-Kuwait Business Committee since 1995, as well as Kuwait Investment Seminar to discuss a wide range of issues including trade relations, investment and industrial cooperation.

10. Both sides underlined the importance of expanding their cooperation in the field of infrastructure construction. The Kuwaiti side expressed its expectation for Japanese companies to actively participate in infrastructure projects in Kuwait and the Japanese side welcomed Kuwait's interest in these areas. The Japanese side also expressed its interests in infrastructure investment such as Independent Water and Power Projects (IWPP) in Kuwait, and the Kuwaiti side welcomed Japan's interest in these areas. The Kuwaiti side also welcomed the dispatch of a Japanese mission to Kuwait in October 2011 which consisted of both representatives of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism, and Japanese construction companies.

11. Both sides reaffirmed the importance of securing water resources in Kuwait, and stressed the necessity of enhancing bilateral water-related business. In this regard, both sides welcomed the progress in the construction of the Shuaiba North Power and Desalination Plant. The Kuwaiti side committed to cooperating on the smooth implementation of this project.

12. The Japanese side pointed out the intention of Japanese companies to participate in business in Kuwait, and expressed its expectation that the offset program be reviewed. The Kuwaiti side took note of Japan's concern, and both sides confirmed their intention to continue discussions towards a successful resolution of this issue.

(Cooperation in Political Areas)

13. Recalling the first session of Joint Committee between the Government of Japan and the Government of the State of Kuwait held in Tokyo in June 2010 headed by foreign ministers, both sides shared their intention to further promote dialogue at all levels in a broad array of fields, including politics, security, economy, energy, investment, culture, science and technology, tourism and education. Taking into account the current situations in the Middle East, regional and international roles that the two countries play, as well as the Memorandum on Conducting Bilateral Consultations between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, both sides decided to launch a security dialogue at a mutually convenient time and in an appropriate manner.

(Cooperation in Regional and International Issues)

14. Both sides reviewed current regional and global situations:

- Both sides expressed their serious concern at the escalation of violence in Syria and strongly urged the Government of Syria to cease the use of violence and quickly start democratic reforms towards political stability and inclusive economic and social development. They highly valued the tenacious efforts of the League of Arab States towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis in Syria. Both sides underlined the importance of the General Assembly resolution of the United Nations (A/RES/66/253) adopted on 16 February, 2012 and relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States. Both sides called the Syrian Government to implement fully and immediately the six-point plan outlined by Dr. Kofi Annan, the Joint Special Envoy of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria.
- Both sides shared their deep concern on Iran's nuclear development and they reaffirmed their intention to cooperate within the international community to solve this issue peacefully and diplomatically.
- Both sides hoped that the Iraqi Government and its people would overcome the current political challenges peacefully through dialogue and make efforts for stabilization of the security situation, reconstruction of its economy, and respect the sovereignty of its neighbors in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions.

- Both sides reaffirmed that, toward the goal of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, they will continue to urge North Korea to take concrete actions, including those recently confirmed between the US and North Korea, to demonstrate its will to seriously implement its denuclearization commitments under the 2005 Six-Party Talks Joint Statement and United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874. In this context, the Japanese side expressed its deep concern over the launch of “satellite” announced on 16 March, 2012, which would be contrary to relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions, and the Kuwaiti side shared such concern of Japan. Both sides reiterated their commitment to fully implementing the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. The Japanese side reemphasized the importance of solving the abduction issue and the Kuwaiti side stressed the importance of resolving this issue as early as possible.

15. Both sides expressed their intention to strengthen their cooperation in the international arena. They reaffirmed the importance of joint efforts to achieve early reform of the United Nations Security Council, including an expansion of permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council, so as to reflect the realities of the current international community.

(Energy Cooperation)

16. Both sides shared the view that the stability of the global oil market is essential for the sound growth of the world economy. The Kuwaiti side expressed its readiness to meet demands of Japan for crude oil in its capacity and the Japanese side expressed its appreciation for Kuwait’s stable supply of crude oil. Both sides renewed their determination to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in the energy sector.

17. The Japanese side highly valued Kuwait’s initiative for stable energy supply through hosting the ministerial meeting of the International Energy Forum in Kuwait in March 2012 and the Asian Ministerial Energy Roundtable in Kuwait in April 2011.

18. Both sides shared recognition on the progress and achievements in scientific and technical cooperation through joint research projects, expert exchange programs, training and holding conferences in the field of petroleum refining, oil field water treatment and aquaculture between Japanese research institutions, universities and Japan Cooperation Center, Petroleum (JCCP), and Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR). Both sides shared the importance of further promoting such cooperation and expanding it to include additional technological frontiers.

19. The Japanese side explained its plan to formulate a new energy and environment strategy with its cutting-edge technology, as well as its efforts towards “green innovation”. Both sides stressed the importance of cooperation in renewable energy and energy conservation. In this context, both sides welcomed the significant progress in the project on solar integrated combined cycle between the Government of the State of Kuwait and Toyota Tsusho Corporation, and expressed their intention to render continuous support for the project.

(Other Areas of Cooperation)

20. Both sides noted the importance of promoting defense exchanges and cooperation between the two countries, such as working-level exchanges and unit-to-unit ones, including goodwill training on the occasion of port calls of Japan Maritime Self-Defense Forces to Kuwait and of the Kuwaiti Navy to Japan. The Japanese side took note of Kuwait’s offer to invite Self-Defense Force officials to the Kuwait Joint Command and Staff College.

21. Both sides decided to promote bilateral cooperation in the areas of education, culture, science and technology, and to further promote people-to-people exchange in these areas, including student exchange and such initiatives as Japanese language courses organized by the Japanese Studies Unit at Kuwait University. Both sides welcomed the progress in technical cooperation for human resource development in Kuwait between Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE) and the Kuwaiti Civil Service Commission, and of cooperation regarding nanotechnology between Japanese researchers and the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (KISR).

22. Both sides welcomed the holding of a medical conference to promote Japan’s advanced medical technology in Kuwait held in May 2011, and expressed their intention to advance cooperation in the medical field, including “medical exchange” between the two countries.

23. Both sides expressed their willingness to promote cooperation on environmental protection between the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the Environment Public Authority of Kuwait. Both sides acknowledged the importance of environmental awareness and expressed their intention to study the possibility of cooperation regarding the supervision and operation of the Environmental Awareness Center in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti side appreciated the outcome of surveys on air and marine pollution in Kuwait which had been conducted by Japanese researchers. Both sides reaffirmed their intention to continue to seek the possibility of bilateral cooperation on environmental issues, and to promote and support the “Kids’ ISO 14000 Program”, an environmental education program developed in Japan.

24. The Kuwaiti side presented its proposal on waiver of visa requirements for Japanese and Kuwaiti diplomatic or official passport holders, seeking entry into the other country for diplomatic or official purposes, and the Japanese side took note of it.

Tokyo, March 22, 2012