

World Humanitarian Summit

High-Level Leaders Roundtable

“Leaving no one behind: a commitment to address forced displacement”

Statement by Mr. Yasuo FUKUDA

Representative of the Government of Japan and former Prime Minister

13:45-15:45, 23 May, 2016

Excellencies and distinguished participants,

In the plenary session earlier I have emphasized the great importance of reaching out to each individual suffering under severe conditions and of preventing the conflicts that result in such misfortune before they happen. During this Roundtable, I would like to speak in more detail about Japan's commitments for actions to improve the situation surrounding refugees and displaced persons.

We must of course continue to provide humanitarian assistance that is necessary on a daily basis right now. At the same time, while far from easy, we must also directly address the issues of poverty and disparity that can be said to be the root causes of the humanitarian crises.

Japan commits to building the capacities of 20 thousand people in the Middle East and North Africa over the upcoming three years. Japan will make every effort to provide assistance, including education and vocational training, designed to empower those suffering from the misfortunes of conflict to build their own future.

Furthermore, it is also important that we stand together in solidarity with refugee host countries, including of course, Turkey where we are gathered today. Japan commits to carry out economic and social development assistance, including infrastructure development, in host communities.

To contribute to a better future for the Syrian youth, far from home with their education opportunities deprived, Japan will also increase acceptance of Syrian students.

Japanese people will invest their energy on the ground to restore peace and order, even if some, to the daily lives of refugees and displaced persons. Japanese NGOs are already involved in providing valuable assistance inside and around refugee camps. Also, as part of the “Japan Team for Syrian Refugees and Communities,” the Government of Japan and JICA will deploy JICA’s experts and volunteers to refugee camps and host communities in the Middle East region.

These various forms of assistance will amount to 6 billion US dollars over a period of 3 years beginning this year. With a view to improving the livelihoods and futures of each individual beneficiary, we are sure that these contributions will surely reach those in need on the ground.

In addition, we place great importance on cooperation with international organizations. In fact, fundamental concepts of “humanitarian and development nexus” and “human security” were originally formulated by former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Madam Sadako Ogata, before being further developed by the Government of Japan.

As an example of our commitment to this area, let me share with you that Japan’s contributions to the UNHCR have increased by 2.5 times over the past 10 years. Japan has also recently committed to contributing 50 million US dollars and a maximum of approximately 900 million dollars in yen loans over the next 5 years for the World Bank’s new financing initiative to support the Middle East and North Africa.

We, Japanese, who experienced great hardship after World War II as well as several great earthquakes, received warm support which greatly encouraged us at times when our hearts were literally breaking. In the same way, I sincerely hope that assistance provided by Japan will be a source of comfort for the people currently facing difficulties.

Finally, let me remind you that from 5pm this evening in collaboration with the Solutions Alliance led by UNHCR, UNDP, Denmark, Turkey and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Japan will hold a Side-Event on the theme of “Strengthening the Humanitarian-Development Nexus.” I look forward to welcoming you there.

Thank you for your attention.