

Statement by H.E. Mr. Yamane Ryuji
Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At Istanbul Conference on Somalia
June 1, 2012

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished guests,

(Opening)

I would like to commend the initiative by the Government of Turkey to organize this conference when the improvement of the situation in Somalia presents a greater opportunity for establishing a unified state, for the first time in 20 years. Moreover, many Somali people are present at this conference representing each group, which I highly value as the demonstration of ownership by Somalia.

(Progress in political process toward the end of transitional period)

Somali leaders need to enact a new constitution, convene a new parliament, elect a new President and Chairperson, and establish a new government during the transitional period ending August 20. Now that we have less than 3 months to go, we urge all stakeholders in Somalia to further advance political process with a spirit of cooperation.

(Support to the TFG)

Japan is ready to contribute to the nation-building of Somalia, working with all the partners including Somaliland, Puntland and TFG, who have willingness to make concerted efforts for the future of Somali people.

A total of 45 million dollars in assistance, which Japan announced at the London Conference in February, has been fully disbursed and is steadily implemented. As mentioned in the UN Secretary General report to the UN Security Council, Japan continues its comprehensive police support such as payment for TFG police officers and provision of equipment and vehicles. In this regard, the ceremony was held in Mogadishu on May 7 to commemorate the grant of the vehicles.

Furthermore, looking ahead to the future of Somalia, it is timely to discuss “investment and development of Somalia,” as one of the themes of this conference. Japan has taken the lead in African development through the TICAD process and is committed to contributing to the economic growth of Somalia by reducing poverty, a root cause of piracy and terrorism. To this

end, it is necessary to establish the new government entrusted by the people of Somalia.

(Piracy off the coast of Somalia)

Piracy off the coast of Somalia poses a major threat to the sea transportation industry and the issue will be a major theme at the TICAD V. Anti-piracy policy requires comprehensive efforts to address root-causes of political, economic, and social problems in Somalia. Our Maritime Self Defense Force has guarded commercial vessels in the Gulf of Aden. Japan has also helped Somalia and its neighboring countries build up maritime security and law enforcement capacity. The IMO regional training center funded by Japan is now under construction in Djibouti and will be completed by the end of this year. I hope that the coast guard officers of Somalia and the neighboring countries, who are trained in this center, will contribute to the stability of the region.

Japan, for its part, will work closely with the IMO led by its Japanese Secretary-General Koji Sekimizu as well as with other donors in combating piracy, and promote the enhancement of maritime security capacity of neighboring countries through bilateral assistance toward the TICAD V.

(Conclusion)

Today, Somalia stands at a critical juncture. In order for Somalia to realize peace and development which many African nations have already achieved and for Somali people to enjoy a peaceful living, I strongly hope that all parties in Somalia to enact a new constitution and conduct political reforms in line with the roadmap. Let me conclude by expressing Japan's commitment to underpin these efforts in collaboration with the international community and to strengthen a cooperative relationship with a new Somali government.