



Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations

866 United Nations Plaza, New York, N.Y. 10017 Phone: (212) 223-4300 • www.un.int/japan/

(Check Against Delivery)

Statement by Mr. Toru Sugio, First Secretary
Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations
At the Meeting of the Special Political and
Decolonization Committee
(Fourth Committee)
On Agenda Item 52:
United Nations Relief and Works Agency
for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

1 November 2011

Madam Chair,

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude to Mr. Filippo Grandi, Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), for his statement as well as for his preparation of the report of the Agency. Japan also pays respect to all UNRWA staff members, who have made enormous efforts to provide essential services to Palestinian refugees on the ground under very difficult circumstances.

Madam Chair,

Japan recognizes that addressing the issue of the Palestinian refugees is of critical importance for the Middle East peace process. It was in light of such recognition that Japan initiated its assistance to the Palestinians through UNRWA in 1953, even before its accession to the United Nations. The aid provided by Japan to UNRWA to date amounts to approximately \$600 million and is part of Japan's overall efforts towards the realization of peace in the Middle East. Japan has so far extended more than \$1.2 billion in assistance to the Palestinians since 1993.

Japan has attached particular importance to assisting Palestinian refugees in the area of human resources development through education and vocational training, based on the strong belief that the Palestinian youth hold the responsibility for a future independent Palestinian state in their hands. Their participation in the creation of a future-oriented society will contribute to the establishment of an independent and viable Palestinian state.

Madam Chair,

In order to achieve a viable Palestinian state, it is essential for Palestinians to create solid economic and industrial foundations and develop administrative institutions and the required human resources.

To that end, Japan will continue to advance the “Corridor for Peace and Prosperity” initiative, designed to develop the Jordan Valley through various projects, including an agro-industrial park and a sewage system on which Japan is currently working in Jericho. It is our hope, through this initiative, to establish a good model for regional cooperation.

Since 2007, Japan has also extended a series of Non-Project Grants-in-Aid to the Palestinian Authority to promote the latter’s economic and social development efforts. The Government of Japan this year has provided to the Palestinian Authority aid in this form amounting to \$11 million. Japan thus continues to support the efforts of the Palestinian Authority to engage in institution-building and human resources development.

Furthermore, Japan has been pursuing coordinated efforts with East Asian countries such as Indonesia and Malaysia in order to contribute to Palestinian State-building efforts. A Japan-Indonesia joint mission for enhancing cooperation on capacity-building for the Palestinian territories was dispatched to the area last February, and relevant officials from the Palestinian Authority visited Indonesia and Malaysia for consultations on concrete projects. We are now working on launching training programs in the areas of agriculture, public health and support to small and medium companies in cooperation with Indonesia, and preparing for a Japan-Malaysia joint mission to the Palestinian territories. Japan will continue to work together with these countries to explore ways and means to enhance such triangular cooperation.

Madam Chair,

As a long-standing partner of UNRWA, Japan is very concerned about the Agency's serious financial situation. In order to ensure that UNRWA can continue to provide necessary services to the people in need, Japan made an additional contribution of \$10 million dollars early this year, and we would like to urge the entire international community to remain steadfast in its support of UNRWA and the Palestinian refugees.

Japan welcomes the efforts that have been made by the UNRWA staff, under the leadership of Commissioner-General Filippo Grandi, to implement the ongoing organizational development process in order to improve the Agency's administration and operations. We very much hope that UNRWA will achieve tangible improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of its assistance activities.

In concluding my remarks, let me note the visit by Mr. Grandi to Japan in August this year, which was a valuable occasion to raise awareness among the Japanese people concerning the situation of Palestinian refugees and the activities of UNRWA. I reiterate our determination that Japan will remain firmly committed to supporting UNRWA and its activities.

Thank you, Madam Chair.