

International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq
Third Meeting of Donor Committee and Expanded Meeting

Tokyo, Japan
October 13, 2004

Opening Speech by Foreign Minister Nobutaka Machimura



Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you here today on behalf of the Japanese Government, which hosts this third meeting of the Donor Committee and expanded meeting of the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq (IRFFI).

Welcome to the Tokyo Meeting!

It is now one year since the Madrid Conference, and the Iraqi political process has entered a crucial period with the approach of next year's elections. This meeting is particularly important also because, for the first time at gathering of donors, we are able to welcome representatives of the Iraqi Interim Government (IIG) and to hear their own vision and strategy for the reconstruction of their country. I am very conscious that it is this vision and strategy which should form the basis for our discussions at this meeting. I sincerely welcome the high-level delegation from the IIG, led by the Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. Dr. Barham Saleh.

During this meeting, we hope to build up an overall picture of assistance to Iraq including that channeled through the IRFFI as well as other multilateral and bilateral routes. It is impossible to have economic recovery without political stability; it is necessary for both to develop together in order to progress. I hope therefore that we can address the issue of the political process in our discussions.

Given the importance of this meeting, it is my strong wish that it will be a success and I would like to express my thanks to all those who have worked on the preparations in order to make it succeed. My thanks are also extended to the United Arab Emirates and Qatar for hosting the previous meetings so successfully.

Iraq is a great country with a long history and is blessed with an abundance of both natural and human resources. The reconstruction of Iraq as a peaceful and democratic country is of vital importance to the stability of the Middle East. In order to carry out a successful reconstruction process, it is important that the political process should be secured, that the Iraqi people's safety be guaranteed and that they should feel the tangible benefits of reconstruction. With these points in mind, Japan will continue to offer full support for the reconstruction of Iraq and to promote international cooperation.

One year ago at the Madrid Conference, Japan pledged a total of up to \$5 billion, of which \$1.5 billion was grant assistance to meet immediate needs. Yesterday, we have decided to extend grant assistance of \$144 million to support three hospitals in Baghdad, Kut and Amara as well as projects in the field of telecommunication. The concrete results of Japanese grant aid can now be seen in the form of visible projects on the ground. Japan is deploying Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA) and the humanitarian reconstruction activities of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces in parallel to support Iraqi reconstruction.

Japan will continue these efforts in the future. The elections to be held by the end of January next year are of the utmost importance. In order that the

elections take place successfully and on schedule, I am pleased to announce today that Japan will contribute \$40 million of its overall contribution to the IRFFI to supporting the elections. Japan also takes this opportunity to call on all countries to contribute towards the smooth running of the elections.

As a further contribution to economic and social reconstruction, Japan will expand her program of training courses as well as moving ahead with preparations for yen loans. In all of her aid efforts, Japan will continue to give full consideration to Iraq's minorities and vulnerable members of society.

Japan wants to offer full support for Iraqi self-reliance. The reconstruction of Iraq should be carried out by and for the Iraqi people. Japan sincerely hopes that the IIG will make maximum efforts to promote the political process and to engage in reconstruction and the improvement of the security situation from a position of ownership.

I believe that the role played by international society should be to offer support to all aspects of Iraq's self-help efforts

One of the most effective ways to strengthen the framework of international cooperation is for countries to make contributions to the IRFFI administered by the UN and the World Bank. In the context of the severe restrictions imposed by the security situation, we should express our respect and thanks for the efforts of those UN and World Bank officials who have worked on behalf of the IRFFI. In order to promote these efforts, I would like to appeal to those countries who have made pledges in Madrid to implement them as quickly as possible and to new donors to contribute to the Fund. In addition, I would like to call on all countries engaged in bilateral aid efforts to steadily implement their projects.

It is important that the Iraqi people, in their current difficult situation, understand and perceive that they have friends in international society extending helping hands to them and that they, for their part, react by developing the strong will to engage in full cooperation as a member of international society.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Japan strived to rebuild her economy with economic assistance from foreign countries. However, the Japanese post-war recovery was not completed within a few years and our eventual success was based on our own recovery plan as well as on the resolute and patient efforts of the Japanese people. As a country that has experienced this process of post-war recovery, Japan supports the Iraqi people in their reconstruction efforts.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Iraq's civil society has a long history of variety, flexibility and tolerance. Based on this characteristic, the Iraqi people must come together to rebuild their nation. It is my strong belief that, if the cooperation of international society can be strengthened, it is possible for Iraq to succeed in constructing a peaceful and democratic nation.

Many people have made strenuous efforts and have even sacrificed their lives in order to realize this vision of a peaceful and democratic nation. The most appropriate way to respect their sacrifice is by carrying out the mission of the reconstruction of Iraq.

The Tokyo Meeting is an opportunity to make a further advance towards that goal and I anticipate being able to send a positive message to the Iraqi people, to Middle Eastern countries, to international society and also to the Japanese people.

Thank you for your kind attention.