

President Karzai, (Minister Rassoul)
Federal Chancellor Merkel, (Minister Westerwelle)
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to express my sincere respect to the efforts exerted by the Governments of Afghanistan and Germany to convene this conference.

This year marks the 10th anniversary since the new Afghanistan made the first step of its nation building here in Bonn in 2001. Throughout this decade, the Afghan-led nation building, supported by the international community, has achieved considerable progress, such as the establishment of the Constitution and democratic elections for the President and the Parliament, as well as the improvement of the living condition of the Afghan people. But at the same time, we should be mindful that Afghanistan is yet to cope with numerous challenges.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

After the devastating Great East Japan earthquake, Japan received a great amount of warm support from the international community including Afghanistan, for which Japan is grateful. To reciprocate the solidarity extended by the rest of the world, we will reaffirm our determination to remain strongly engaged in support of Afghanistan.

For the past ten years, Japan has provided assistance in various areas including improvement of security, political process, humanitarian assistance, and enhancement of human resources. To list some examples, vaccination for 50 million people, literacy education for 600,000 people, and constructions and renovations for more than 700 schools. Japan remains committed to provide up to around 5 billion USD within about 5 years since 2009.

This year, the nation building in Afghanistan has entered a new phase, toward its true self-reliance. We need, now, to draw a clear vision that leads to the long-term stability of Afghanistan toward and beyond 2014.

From this viewpoint, it is important for Afghanistan and the international community to cooperate in the three areas; security, economy, and regional cooperation.

The first is security; ensuring stabilization and irreversible progress in security transition through political process. To this end, the Afghan-led national reconciliation is vital, and the international community must come together for its progress. It is also important to accelerate reintegration so that reconciliation may make further progress and its achievement may be consolidated. Japan will continue to assist proactively the Afghan-led efforts on its Peace and Reintegration Programme, APRP.

The second is economy; achieving the sustainable growth of Afghanistan. This goal can only be attained by the strong partnership between Afghanistan and the international community through the Transformation Decade. Japan is firmly committed to the long-term engagement with the Afghan efforts. The international community should cooperate with the Afghan Government to strengthen the sustainability and self-reliance of its economic and fiscal management in order to alleviate the expected macro-economic impact of the transition. It is also important to provide the people of Afghanistan with a more stable and better quality of life.

The third is regional cooperation; realizing the enduring stability of Afghanistan, a stable and cooperative relationship between and among Afghanistan and the countries in the region is indispensable. It is therefore important to strengthen cooperation under the Istanbul Process and promote regional economic cooperation toward the development of the whole region by strengthening Afghanistan's connectivity to the regional and global economies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to announce that Japan intends to host a ministerial conference in Tokyo in July, next year, as a step following Bonn. The conference will address, in addition to the coordination of international economic assistance through the transition period, Afghanistan's strategy for sustainable development including regional economic cooperation. We expect to have discussions which serve to identify most imminent priorities for the Government of Afghanistan, in pursuit of attaining both fiscal sustainability and development needs. I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing our resolve to exert our utmost efforts to the long-lasting stability of Afghanistan working together with all the participating countries here.

Thank you.