

Country Development Cooperation Policy for the Lebanese Republic

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1. Purpose of Development Cooperation

Lebanon is one of the key players for the Middle East Peace Process, and thus its stability is crucial for peace and stability of the region.

The civil war ended in 1990 and the conflict with Israel in 2006 destroyed social infrastructures and created political instability, which continues to affect Lebanon till today. Lebanon has been working on the reconstruction with the support of USD 7.5 billion from the international community that was committed during the International Conference for Support to Lebanon (Paris III Conference) in January 2007. However, most of the development projects were focused in the cities, causing a gap between rural and urban areas; additionally the internal politics is extremely unstable due to the rivalries among different parties. Furthermore, Lebanon hosts the largest per capita population of refugees with 1.5 million displaced Syrians, which put additional burdens on the social infrastructure and economy of the host communities, and caused an increased tension especially in the region near the Syrian border.

Under these circumstances, it is very important to support Lebanon through ODA in order to help the country reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and ensure the stability of Lebanon and the entire Middle East region, as part of comprehensive strategies to reach the Middle East Peace; this will promote the “proactive contribution to Peace” that Japan has been focused on.

2. Basic Policy of Japanese ODA:

Support for the Stability of Lebanon as a Cornerstone of Middle East Peace Process

With Lebanese political and security situation taken into consideration, Japan will support the stability of Lebanon through assisting the host communities and improving the living environment for the vulnerable people, Palestine and Syrian refugees, in order to stabilize the country and promote self-sufficiency.

3. Priority Areas (Specific Objectives)

(1) Support for the Socially Vulnerable

Japan will support capacity building of the Lebanese administration that will promote the country's self-sufficiency, eliminate the disparity in income level and regional inequalities within Lebanon, and improve public service. Additionally, the Japanese Government will continue providing assistance to Lebanon in various sectors, including health, education, and demining and UXO clearance, which will improve social and economic infrastructure of the vulnerable people.

(2) Support for Syrian refugees and the host communities that are affected by the Syrian influx

There are around 1.5 million Syrian refugees (around 0.5 million said to be unregistered) residing in Lebanon, which accounts for about one third of the whole population. Due to the prolonged Syrian crisis, they live in severe social-economic conditions that might lead to social instability, such as the expansion of extremism. For these reasons, Japan will support the improvement of living conditions for Syrians refugees through bilateral and multilateral assistances.

In addition, accommodating the large number of Syrian refugees puts significant burdens on the social infrastructure and economy of the local communities, which might create social instability, such as increased tensions between Syrian refugees and local residents. To alleviate the negative impacts, Japan will assist local communities and promote the economic and social stability.

(3) Support for Palestine Refugees

Lebanon does not allow the permanent settlement of Palestine refugees in Lebanon because it will change the internal population balance of the 18 sects. Therefore, restrictions have been placed on the social rights of 420,000 Palestine refugees (about 10% of the whole population in Lebanon), such as ownership of real estates and employment opportunities. As a result, Palestine refugees constantly live in poor conditions, which might cause new confrontations with the host community. To avoid possible negative consequences, Japan will support the improvement of their living conditions in cooperation with partners including international organizations.

4. Points to be considered

With the existence of 18 religious sects in the country including Islam (Sunni, Shia and Druze) and Christianity (Maronite, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic and Armenian), sectarianism is prevalent in Lebanon. Additionally, 420,000 Palestine refugees and 1.5 million Syrian refugees are currently residing in the country. The complexity of the social structure should be always taken into consideration in supporting Lebanon.

End.

Annex: Rolling Plan