

**Speech by Ambassador at the Signing Ceremony of the Lake
Urmia Restoration Project**

His Excellency, Dr. Isa Kalantari, honorable Vice President and Head
of the Department of Environment,

Ms. Anna Marie Carlsen, honorable Resident Representative a.i. of
UNDP in Iran,

Dr. Moghadasi, honorable Head of Center for International Affairs and
Conventions,

Eng. Hamid Zohrabi, honorable Acting Head of Natural Environment
and Biodiversity of the Department of Environment,

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to attend this occasion and say a few words
on behalf of the Government of Japan.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to those who
have kindly organized this Signing Ceremony of the Lake Urmia
Restoration Project.

To our regret and as is widely known to the public, the situation of the
Lake Urmia is still critical today.

In response to the critical situation of the Lake, the Government of
Japan decided back in February to donate 1 million U.S. Dollars to the
UNDP's project for the restoration of the Lake Urmia via local
community participation in sustainable agricultural practices and
biodiversity conservation.

I would like to briefly mention that Japan has been continuously supporting the restoration of the Lake since 2014, and in fact, this is the fifth time Japan has contributed to the endeavors to revive Lake Urmia, a total of about 5 million U.S. Dollars thus far, following the Summit Meetings between Prime Minister Abe and President Rouhani in 2013.

As a result, sustainable agriculture techniques have been established and implemented in 110 villages. The project to be implemented this year aims at up-scaling the project sites to 20 new villages.

Japan strongly hopes that this project further contributes to the restoration of the beautiful Lake as well as the welfare and betterment of the lives of the local people.

It should be noted that the Government of Japan also made another financial contribution to FAO in August 2016, for its project on “Integrated Program for Sustainable Water Resources Management in the Urmia Lake Basin”.

I strongly hope that these projects generate maximum synergy.

Lastly, I would like to once again express my sincere gratitude to all those who are actively engaged and devoted to this truly challenging endeavor.

Thank you very much for your attention.