

Debriefing on the 38th Japan Cooperation Forum for the Middle East in Dubai from Chairman Okuda to Prime Minister Abe

On August 27, 2013, Hiroshi Okuda, Chairman of JCCME, met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in Doha, Qatar during the Prime Minister's visit to the Middle East, to give a debriefing on the 38th Japan Cooperation Forum for the Middle East, which was held in Dubai, UAE over a two-day period from August 25 to 26.

After expressing his gratitude to Prime Minister Abe for making a visit to the Middle East for the second time so soon after his first visit during Golden Week, Chairman Okuda explained the Forum's objective to gather Middle East experts from among industries, government and academia in an exchange of information and views about future directions in relation to the Middle East, and reported that this year's conference was a particular success, with an attendance of a record number of close to 400 participants.

Chairman Okuda then gave an outline of the major themes that were discussed in the Forum, including (1) the political and economic situations and the business environment in Middle East countries, namely UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Qatar, Iran and North Africa; (2) the short-term impact and long-term outlook of the shale revolution on the global energy market; and (3) infrastructure export initiatives based on demand for infrastructure in the MENA countries and Japan's growth strategies. He also noted the strong requests that arose from Japanese companies for top-level sales campaigns and joint public-private sales campaigns for promoting infrastructure exports, in particular.

Prime Minister Abe expressed surprise that there is total demand for infrastructure worth \$4.3 trillion up to 2020 in the MENA region, and renewed his understanding of the large potential and significance of the region's market.

