

G8 Meeting of Foreign Ministers:

Chair's Summary

March 15, 2011, Paris

G8 Foreign Ministers met in Paris on 14-15 March. They offered their sympathy and condolences to the Japanese Government and people. G8 countries are ready to provide Japan with every help to overcome the consequences of the disaster. Ministers thanked their Japanese colleague, Takeaki Matsumoto, for his extensive briefing on the latest developments of the situation. They expressed their full confidence in the ability of the Japanese Government to solve the crisis and paid tribute to the courage and dignity shown by the people of Japan. G8 countries will continue to monitor the situation closely and remain ready to act in support of Japan, including through the IAEA.

Ministers discussed the ongoing upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa

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Libya

Ministers endorsed the legitimate aspirations of the Libyan people for a future of democracy and prosperity. The Libyan people, like all peoples, have the right to choose their leadership openly and democratically. Ministers looked forward to welcoming a new Libya as a fully fledged partner of the international community and to establishing mutually beneficial relations.

Ministers called on Muammar Qadhafi to respect the legitimate claim of the Libyan people to fundamental rights, freedom of expression and a representative form of government. They warned that failure to do so would have dire consequences. They commended the unanimous adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1970, the unanimous decision of the United Nations General Assembly to suspend Libya's membership of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and the appointment of a special envoy of the United Nations Secretary General. They welcomed the International Criminal Court's decision to investigate all crimes against humanity.

Ministers welcomed the fact that the UNSC is considering, as a matter of urgency, a wide range of measures to ensure the protection of the Libyan population from attack by Muammar Qadhafi's forces. In that context, Ministers welcomed the recent declaration by the League of Arab States, calling for a number of measures to protect and support the Libyan population. They stressed the importance of regional participation in any such efforts, and agreed to follow up urgently with the League of Arab States. They also agreed that the UNSC should increase the pressure, including through economic measures, for Muammar Qadhafi to leave. Ministers also recalled the decisions of the African Union and the declarations of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference and decided to coordinate closely with the regional organisations. Ministers welcomed the declaration adopted by the extraordinary European Council on 11 March.

They commended the adoption of Resolution S-15/1 by the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), and in particular the decision to urgently dispatch an independent, international commission of inquiry to investigate all alleged violations of international human rights law in Libya.

They welcomed all efforts already undertaken to provide humanitarian assistance to Libya and neighbouring countries. They commended the actions of the UNHCR and the World Food Programme in that regard. Ministers stand ready to support further humanitarian measures.

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Broader Middle East and North Africa

Ministers recognised that populations have legitimate aspirations for democracy and want to play a role in the decisions that affect their lives and to contribute to progress and prosperity for their countries. They expressed their readiness to assist in peaceful democratic transitions and to reinvigorate their cooperation with countries in the region. Ministers are deeply convinced that there is nothing to lose from democracy as it lays the best path to peace, stability, prosperity and shared growth.

Ministers commended the brave and determined actions of men and women throughout the region to make their voices heard and bring about change. This is a movement of truly historic magnitude which has the potential to transform the global political landscape. This opportunity is here for all responsible governments to seize. G8 members are determined not to let it go by.

In particular, should Egypt and Tunisia so wish, G8 countries are ready to assist them in the transition to democracy, including in the swift organisation and monitoring of transparent, democratic and fair electoral processes which will be needed in the interest of a smooth and peaceful transition to democracy and to assist them in addressing the region's economic and social challenges. G8 countries will mobilise regional and international organisations to support urgent social, economic and fiscal measures to create employment, stabilise public finances and further open export markets.

Ministers confirm the value of the ongoing G8-BMENA Partnership for Progress and a Common Future, and reiterate their commitment to the G8-BMENA process as a mechanism for consultation and cooperation between governments, civil society organisations, and business to support political, economic and social reforms that respond to the aspirations of the region's citizens.

Ministers recalled their constant commitment to the unity, sovereignty and independence of Lebanon. They reaffirmed their commitment to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL) as an independent court, created by UNSC Resolution 1757. The STL must continue its work without impediment and with the cooperation of the Lebanese Government. They encouraged additional voluntary contributions for its funding.

Ministers expressed serious concern at the ongoing suppression of democratic progress in Iran, in particular the detention of Iranian opposition leaders Mir-Hossein Mousavi and Mehdi Karroubi and their wives, and the suppression of peaceful protests. Ministers called on the Iranian authorities to release both leaders and all those arrested for seeking to make their voices heard.

Further G8 action

Ministers are convinced that events in the region offer the opportunity for a new quality of partnership. The G8 is uniquely suited to addressing both political and economic issues. Our Group also calls on other nations to join us in offering concrete measures of support for peaceful change, shared growth and increased prosperity for all. With a view to mutually-beneficial and harmonious co-development, G8 countries will work, individually and jointly in relevant forums, for the swift resumption of trade, and human and economic exchanges with the region. Ministers welcomed in this regard the efforts already undertaken by the European Union within the framework of its Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean as well as the offer to support international efforts in a coordinating role.

Ministers decided to increase their dialogue with civil societies throughout the region, with a view to fostering the further emergence of free media, the empowerment of non-governmental organisations, and the development of vocational training and socially responsible businesses. They agreed to use the 2011 BMENA meeting in Kuwait to that end.

Ministers expressed their readiness to consider short-term measures to alleviate the adverse economic effects of current developments, in Egypt and Tunisia, including through short-term budgetary assistance based on established needs as well as further support regarding food and other basic staples relief in coordination with relevant organisations. They will further explore the issue with the international institutions and the regional development banks.

Middle East Peace Process

Ministers are convinced that the current historic developments in the region make resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through negotiations and the further integration of Israel in its regional environment even more important.

Ministers expressed serious concern about the current stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process.

In line with previous Quartet statements, they remain committed to the conclusion of a negotiated framework agreement on all final status issues by September 2011. They also share the hope expressed by President Obama that we can have an agreement that will lead to a new member of the United Nations - an independent, sovereign State of Palestine living in peace with Israel. There is no viable alternative to the two-state solution.

Ministers considered that a long-term solution to this conflict can only be achieved through negotiations. They urged both parties to return to substantive direct talks.

Ministers commended the work of the Palestinian Authority in developing the capacity to run a democratic and peaceful state, founded on the rule of law and living in peace and security with Israel. They stressed the need to continue to support these state-building efforts, both politically and financially. They welcomed the organisation by France of a second donors' conference this June in Paris.

Ministers called on parties to refrain from unilateral actions and to create an atmosphere conducive to peace. Ministers strongly reaffirm that unilateral actions by either party cannot prejudge the outcome of negotiations and will not be recognised by the international community. Ministers called for an end to rocket fire from Gaza and stressed the need for calm and security for both peoples. Settlement activities in territory occupied in 1967 constitute a major obstacle to peace and must stop.

Foreign Ministers stressed that peace in the Middle East should be comprehensive and reiterated the importance of negotiations on the Israeli-Syria and Israeli-Lebanon tracks.

They remain committed to holding a conference in 2012 on a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, as endorsed by the 2010 Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, with a view to creating a peaceful environment in the region.

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Ministers also discussed the following regional situations:

Africa

The G8 and Africa have a long-standing partnership based on shared principles and values, common interests and mutual accountability. Ministers committed to renewing this partnership and their ongoing support for the African Union's peace and security architecture, including through peace-keeping capability-building efforts. In this respect they were encouraged by many positive developments in Africa which has witnessed robust growth and attracted increased foreign direct investments. Against this background, ministers discussed several remaining challenges.

Ministers called on all Ivorian parties and stakeholders to respect the will of the people and the outcome of the credible elections of President Alassane Ouattara. They underscored their support for the decision of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union and stressed that it is binding for all parties. An escalation of violence would cause disruption of peace and security both in Côte d'Ivoire and the whole sub-region. Ministers urged those responsible to lift the barricading of the legitimate authorities of Côte d'Ivoire and to refrain from threatening, attacking or impeding the UN personnel in the discharge of their mission. They condemned the recent killings of peaceful demonstrators and called for an end to all acts of violence. They reiterated that any threat to attempts at finding a solution, any obstruction to the work of the UNOCI and other international actors, and any violation of human rights and international humanitarian law would result in the imposition of targeted measures, as outlined in UNSC Resolution 1946.

Ministers congratulated the parties of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and the people of Sudan for the successful referendum. They expressed concern over the still ongoing violence and called on the parties to reach agreements on all the outstanding issues including Abyei as a matter of urgency. They noted as well the persistent violence and insecurity in Darfur and called on all parties to engage with a view to concluding a peace agreement. They expressed their readiness to offer increased assistance, including the possibility of debt relief, to authorities in Khartoum and Juba and to lend their full support to all Sudanese people.

Ministers remain deeply concerned that the Somali people continue to suffer the effects of 20 years of conflict. Somalia's instability increases the suffering of the Somali people, impedes international efforts to stem terrorism, piracy and illegal trafficking and risks further destabilising the Horn of Africa. They expressed regret over the unilateral three-year extension of the Transitional Federal Parliament and urged all Transitional Federal Institutions to work together constructively and speed up political reform. Ministers furthermore underscored the importance of international cooperation as the Transitional Period mandate expires this August. Ministers called on all actors to support an inclusive, Somali-led process as the means to resolve the conflict. They commended the action undertaken by the AU and its mission, AMISOM, and expressed their full support for the action of the UNSG's Special Representative for Somalia.

Ministers expressed their continued strong concern regarding the serious threat of piracy emanating from Somalia. Piracy is a product of Somalia's instability and poses risks to the wider region, the safety of mariners, regional economies, freedom of navigation and international trade. Ministers underlined the determination of G8 countries to continue to respond resolutely to this threat, through a coordinated response at sea and by tackling longer-term regional capability development needs, including through the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia. In parallel, Ministers agreed that effective prosecution and imprisonment needs increased support. They warmly welcomed the report by the UNSG's Special Adviser on piracy. They looked forward to further work in the Security Council on this issue.

Ministers indicated their determination to assist efforts to strengthen peace and security in the whole of the Great Lakes region and underscored the importance of free and fair 2011 elections in the DRC for the long-term peace and stability of the region.

Afghanistan

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a stable, peaceful and sovereign Afghanistan, free of outside interference, terrorism, extremist violence, and illicit drug production and trafficking, with full ownership of its own security, governance and development. In support of this goal and in close coordination with the sustained efforts of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), G8 countries will continue to support the transition process endorsed by Afghanistan and the international community at the London and Kabul Conferences as well as at the NATO Lisbon Summit. G8 countries welcomed the inauguration of the new Afghan Parliament and will continue to support efforts to strengthen Afghan democracy. Ministers

welcomed the work of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan to launch a political process to reconcile all who renounce violence, break ties with al Qaeda, denounce terrorism and accept the Afghan Constitution. Ministers affirmed their readiness to take appropriate measures in support of this process, which has to be Afghan-led. Ministers stressed the importance of political and economic regional cooperation for stability, peace and prosperity in Afghanistan and the wider region. In this respect, they welcomed the prospect of increased transborder cooperation on rail, water, energy and human resources.

Haiti

One year after the terrible earthquake that struck Haiti, reconstruction remains a huge challenge that needs to be undertaken by fully legitimate authorities. In this respect, Ministers stressed the importance of the second round of the presidential and parliamentary elections to be held on 20 March and called for a peaceful and orderly process. Ministers reiterated their support to Haitian efforts towards full recovery. Ministers also stressed that more concerted efforts should be taken by all actors to strengthen the rule of law and good governance in Haiti.

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Ministers also discussed non-proliferation and disarmament. They restated their resolve to spare no efforts in fighting proliferation, to take all appropriate national measures to follow up the decisions of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and to promote the early entry into force and universalisation of the CTBT, early commencement of substantive negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament with an agreed, comprehensive and balanced programme of work on an FMCT, and further development of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle as part of IAEA efforts to broaden access to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Ministers condemned the DPRK's recently disclosed uranium enrichment activities in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874. They urged the DPRK to comply with its international obligations and commitments and to promptly address international humanitarian concerns, such as the abduction issue.

Iran's persistent failure to comply with its obligations under six UNSC resolutions and ten IAEA Board of Governors resolutions is a cause for utmost concern. Ministers regretted that while Iran finally accepted to meet twice with China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union High Representative following the adoption of measures in UNSCR 1929, Iran has not yet entered into a constructive dialogue to resolve the international community's concerns regarding its nuclear program. Ministers recalled that they recognise Iran's right to the exclusively peaceful use of nuclear energy under the NPT, but that with these rights comes the responsibility for Iran to abide by its international obligations.

Ministers reaffirmed the valuable role of the G8 Global Partnership as a means for supporting non-proliferation efforts around the world.

Ministers noted that as the threat of terrorism evolves, increasingly multifaceted and coordinated partnerships are needed. Ministers emphasized their unity in the fight against terrorism and determination to enhance coordinated efforts on this track in accordance with priorities defined in Muskoka. They asked the Roma/Lyon group to prepare a status report for the Leaders' Summit in Deauville.

They were encouraged that many countries have joined the fight against terrorism, in particular in Africa. The Group of 8 and its members stand ready to deepen their cooperation with African countries and relevant regional organisations in addressing the common challenge of terrorism. Ministers underscored the central role that the UN must continue to play in the collective fight against terrorism and recognised the need to work with partners from all regions to create a counter-terrorism forum that will strengthen the necessary international architecture to address 21st century terrorism. They look forward to the comprehensive Strategies for Security and

Development in the Sahel and in the Horn of Africa currently being developed by the European Union, and other G8 members' initiatives.

Ministers look forward to the Ministerial Meeting on Transatlantic Cocaine Trafficking on 10 May as an opportunity to further international cooperation to stem the flow of illicit drugs. They also note that the Russian Federation and France have proposed to convene a Third Ministerial Meeting of the Paris Pact Initiative on the Afghan opiate trade in 2011. G8 countries will work together to develop a mutually agreeable concept and draft agenda.

Ministers agreed to the attached joint statement on the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

Source: http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/france-priorities_1/global-economy_1116/economic-and-financial-organizations_7352/g8_7353/g8-meeting-of-foreign-ministers_15222.html