
Joint Press Conference Held with Iraqi Deputy Minister for Refining and Gas Processing

JCCP invited H.E. Mr. Ahmed A.A. Al-Shamma, Deputy Minister for Refining and Gas Processing, Ministry of Oil–Iraq, to give a keynote speech at the 29th International Symposium. Being a central figure in the Iraqi Ministry of Oil, Mr. Al-Shamma received so many interview requests from news outlets that a press conference was scheduled, to be accompanied by H.E. Mr. Lukman Faily, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq, and Mr. Masataka Sase, Executive Director of JCCP.

The joint conference took place on January 25, 2011, for one hour from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m., in the Clifford Room at Hotel Okura Tokyo, with the attendance of around 20 reporters from various news media inside and outside of Japan. The reporters generally had questions about the potential of Japanese companies to participate in new projects in Iraq. Mr. Al-Shamma avoided making any predictive statement, saying instead that “all relevant matters shall be decided by the new cabinet,” and that “nothing has yet been decided.” However, he did say that he acknowledges Japanese companies for their high-quality technologies and performance capabilities.

Below is the opening statement given by Mr. Al-Shamma at the beginning of the joint press conference.

First of all, I am pleased to have this opportunity to talk with so many people from the media.

The relationship between Iraq and Japan goes way back to the 1960s, when Japan first provided its assistance in various infrastructure development projects in Iraq’s oil, natural gas and power generation industries and other industries. Today, several tens of years after completion of these projects, the infrastructures are now undergoing a period of degradation that requires maintenance. We are hoping the Japanese companies that have cooperated in the initial projects will return to Iraq, this time to implement maintenance projects. Iraq has also implemented various reconstruction projects since 2003 with cooperation from Japan, and through these projects, the Iraqi Ministry of Oil has sought opportunities that could benefit both Iraq and Japan.

Japan has provided training programs in wide-ranging fields in response to our needs for human resource development, which surfaced as a prominent issue in our reconstruction efforts. These programs, made possible with the assistance of the Japanese government, companies, and organizations, have been largely instrumental in the development of human resources in Iraq.



*H.E. Mr. Ahmed A.A. Al-Shamma, Deputy Minister for Refining and Gas Processing, Ministry of Oil–Iraq (center);
H.E. Mr. Lukman Faily, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq (left);
Mr. Masataka Sase, Executive Director of JCCP (right)*



Joint press conference

The Iraqi Ministry of Oil has also played a consistent and continuous role in discussions on the formulation of new projects with Japanese companies. For example, with yen loans from Japan we have so far implemented a project for restoration of a crude oil export facility in Basra, a project for rehabilitation of the Basra Refinery, and a project for rehabilitation of the Baiji Refinery.

At present, refineries in Iraq do not have the refining capacity needed to respond adequately to domestic demand for oil products. The supply shortage of oil

products is becoming conspicuous, and is calling for continued imports to secure necessary supplies. However, with Japan's cooperation, we are hoping to increase our self-sufficiency of oil products and to acquire the latest technology and knowledge that would allow us to do so. To Iraq's oil industry, Japan's cooperation is indispensable to acquiring new technologies and enhancing technical performance.

It is also important for our two countries to promote cultural exchange. All staff members of the Ministry of Oil who have received training in Japan have returned to Iraq, impressed with the lifestyles and culture of the Japanese people. I think that knowing Japanese history and culture is helpful in deepening relations with Japan and strengthening the result of training. Therefore, in addition to technical exchanges in the oil industry, cultivating cultural exchanges and ties through cooperation between our two countries is extremely important and beneficial.

Lastly, as my closing words of appreciation to Japan, I would like to express my sincerest expectations for Japan's continued cooperation in deepening our mutual relationship. Thank you very much.

<by Hisayoshi Tanda, Administration Dept.>

