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No. 21

**Statement of Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr. Taro Kono, regarding the announcement by Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, Dr. Haider Abadi, of the liberation of all Iraqi areas from Daesh**

1. Japan would like to express its congratulations for the announcement by Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, H.E. Dr. Haider Abadi, of the liberation of all Iraqi territories from Daesh today (December 9<sup>th</sup> local time) as an important step towards peace and stability in Iraq.
2. Japan highly appreciates the Iraqi people's unity and cooperation, overcoming differences in sect, ethnicity and where they come from for the war against terrorism. At the same time, we express our heartfelt condolences and sympathies for the victims and bereaved families. Japan will continue to support as much as possible the efforts of Iraqi people to solve internal outstanding issues peacefully based on the constitution and constructive dialogue making use of their unity in order to prevent the return of violent extremism.

(End)