



ambassy remembers tsunami victims

Charity bazaar draws big crowd

TOKYO, May 14, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Embassy in Tokyo achieved on Saturday a great success in a charity bazaar aimed at raising funds for the March 11 disaster victims in Japan, with a large number of visitors attending the one-day event.

The proceeds from the humanitarian charity will be donated to the disaster-affected areas through the Japanese Red Cross Society, according to Kuwaiti Ambassador to Japan Abdulrahman Al-Otaibi.

The stands set up in the embassy were thronged with people buying a variety of high quality Kuwaiti products such as traditional costumes, artifacts, food, sweets and coffee.

A line-up of activities also included Arabic calligraphy, a photo shoot in Kuwaiti costumes and henna art for visitors, as well as Arab music concert and a raffle.

Kuwait is the only Arab country whose embassy hosts a charity bazaar in Japan for the victims from the disaster on March 11.

In her speech at the opening ceremony, former Defense Minister Yuriko Koike, who is serving for the Japanese Red Cross Society, praised the Kuwaiti embassy for organizing the event.

"On behalf of the people and the government of Japan, I would like to thank H.H. the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah and Ambassador Al-Otaibi for expressing deep sympathy to our country, especially for victims in the devastating areas. Kuwait has responded promptly and sincerely to our crisis soon after the disaster." She also commended Kuwait's decision to donate 5 million barrels of crude oil to Japan, which is equivalent to some \$550 million. "We will remember deep friendship and kindness shown by Kuwait for centuries." Vice Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Yoshikatsu Nakayama said he was touched by the solidarity extended by the government and the people of Kuwait through generous donations and the charity bazaar.

He also praised Al-Otaibi's visit last month to the disaster-hit northeastern region to offer survivors specially-designed soccer balls, school supplies, food and living necessities. "It gave the people great relief, encouragement and hope, especially for children," Nakayama said.

The magnitude-9.0 earthquake and tsunami killed nearly 26,000 people in northeastern and eastern Japan.

For his part, the ambassador reiterated Kuwait's keenness to help Japan's reconstruction efforts, saying, "We are trying to maximally eliminate pain from all the people affected by the disaster. I am confident that Japan will recover from this catastrophe and rebuild the nation even stronger than ever. I also thank Kuwaiti diplomats and all embassy staff for their efforts to ensure the safety of Kuwaiti citizens here after the disaster and working hard for this event." Al-Otaibi also expressed his gratitude to the Kuwaiti government for allowing his embassy to continue its work in Japan and supporting the charity event by providing the needed.

Speaking to Kuwait News Agency (KUNA), a Japanese woman in her 30's who lives nearby the embassy said, "I've just dropped in after seeing a banner outside. Having a charity bazaar is a wonderful way to lend assistance to victims. I was impressed with the active role of Kuwaiti embassy in supporting our country at a time many other embassies in Tokyo have shut down and evacuated diplomats after an accident at the Fukushima nuclear power plant." Another Japanese resident, who came with his wife and two children, said, "It is our first time to enter the embassy. This bazaar does not only contribute to relief efforts in the disaster-hit areas, but also helps bring Kuwaiti and Japanese cultures closer." Meanwhile, Egyptian Ambassador to Japan Dr Walid Abdelnasser praised the Kuwaiti ambassador and his wife, Jamila Al-Otaibi for taking an initiative to raise donations for victims.

"This shows how Kuwait and Arab countries are appreciating and respecting Japan, and it will be reflected positively." Pakistani Ambassador to Japan Noor Muhammad Jadmani said the event is not only for raising money toward relief efforts, but also becomes a good opportunity to express solidarity of Kuwait and international community with Japan.

"Japan has helped Pakistan and other countries during disasters, and now it is our turn to support Japan in its difficult times," Jadmani said.



Al-Otaibi