

Speech by Former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori
(The Tenth Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union)

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In Addis Ababa

President John Kufuor, Chairperson of the African Union, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the honorable presidents, everyone:

(Introduction)

I would like to express my sincere gratitude toward His Excellency Mr. Konare, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, for his special invitation to this Assembly, and also toward His Excellency Mr. Kufuor, President of the Republic of Ghana, for giving me a chance to deliver speech here. Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda cannot leave Japan at this time because the Diet is in session, so it was decided that in his place I would attend this session as the representative of the Government of Japan for the first time. Prime Minister Fukuda participated in World Economic Forum, having vigorous discussions on Africa with President Wade of Senegal who is also present here today, U2 singer Mr. Bono, and Mr. Gates, Chairman of Microsoft Corporation. After hearing these discussions, I am finally able to come to Ethiopia today, fulfilling my long-cherished dream. I am deeply honored to have been given the opportunity to make this speech to the opening ceremony of the 10th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, a most memorable occasion. I would like to thank President John Kufuor, Chairperson of the African Union, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and the other people involved in organizing this event for their kindness.

This year is an extremely important year for Japan's diplomacy toward Africa. That is because Japan will host two big international conferences that are essential to the story of African development. The first of these is, of course, the Fourth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD IV) to be co-organized by the United Nations, the UNDP, the World Bank and Japan from May 28 to May 30 in Yokohama.

(The TICAD Process)

TICAD was born 15 years ago, in 1993. That was just after the end of the Cold War, and "aid fatigue" in the international community was casting a dark shadow over future support for Africa. Against this background, Japan called for the continuation of support for Africa. Since that time, Japan has consistently continued its deep involvement in African development. By accident or by design, the subsequent efforts of the African countries stopped the decline in per capita GDP in Sub-Saharan Africa at the time of the commencement of the TICAD process, and it has been steadily rising ever since.

Currently, a variety of frameworks for consultation on African issues are in place. For example, the China-Africa Cooperation Forum was held in November 2006, and the second Africa-EU Summit was held in Lisbon, Portugal last month. However, I think it is fair to say that TICAD was the first such framework and is well-established. Fifteen years have passed since the TICAD process commenced. The situation of Africa has been completely transformed. Even comparing with 2003 when TICAD III was held, the AU, which had only just been created at that time, has already grown over the past five years into an indispensable organization to convey the voice of Africa to the international community. I believe this development of the AU is highly regarded as an embodiment of the principle of the "ownership" of Africa, which Japan has been strongly advocating in the TICAD process all along.

(TICAD IV)

The positive developments in Africa go beyond the evolution of the AU. Currently, many countries in Africa continue to achieve high economic growth rates due to their abundant natural resources. At the same time, we

are witnessing a reduction in the number of the conflicts which cast shadow over the 1990s. Many countries achieved peace and elected new leaders through democratic methods. TICAD IV is to be held to push these positive trends further, so its basic message is “Towards a Vibrant Africa.” Regarding the current chaos in Kenya, I hope that Kenya, which has a long democratic history and tradition, will work together with the AU and the rest of the international community to find a peaceful resolution to the conflict and regain its “vibrancy” at the earliest possible time. As a sign of Japan’s strong wish, Japan is planning to contribute 4.1 million US dollars through World Food Program (WFP) and UNICEF, which is providing food, water and other types of humanitarian assistance, in order to assist internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Kenya who have reportedly reached a total of 250,000 persons.

In TICAD IV, the focus will be on three core areas, namely “Boosting economic growth,” “Ensuring human security including achieving MDGs and consolidation of peace,” and “Addressing environment issues and climate change.” TICAD is an open forum on African development so, not only African countries but also a large number of donor countries and international organizations with an interest in African development are planning to participate.

Together with Prime Minister Fukuda , I would like to take a lead in earnestly discussing the future of Africa based on the themes just mentioned. Moreover, TICAD IV is more than merely a forum for exchanging views. With the cooperation of the Japan-AU Parliamentary Friendship League and the government I intend make TICAD IV into a forum that will produce concrete results in the African continent as well, based on Japan’s successful experiences of providing support in Asia. I am looking forward to seeing all of the honorable presidents and heads of state here today again in Yokohama to work toward the success of TICAD IV.

(G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit)

The other important international conference Japan will host this year is the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit to be held from July 7 to July 9, 2008.

It has been eight years since Japan hosted a G8 summit as the chair of the G8. On the last occasion, the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit in 2000, I was the chair, and that summit is an unforgettable memory for me. That is because I believe that the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit was, in one sense, a turning point for Africa.

As the chair at the time, I called for an exchange of views between the heads of state of the G8 and the heads of state of developing countries, including African countries. The G8 heads of state agreed with this proposal so, on the night before the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, this outreach was achieved for the first time in the history of G8 summits. This outreach meeting was dignified by the presence of His Excellency Mr. Bouteflika, who is President of People’s Democratic Republic of Algeria and is present today as well, Mr. Obasanjo, former President of Federal Republic of Nigeria, and His Excellency Mr. Mbeki, President of Republic of South Africa. Since then, Africa has been one of the major agenda at every G8 summit. Furthermore, at the Kyushu-Okinawa Summit, combating infectious diseases was one of the major agenda, and this is one of the reasons why initiatives by the international community to combat infectious diseases, including the establishment of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria, have been strengthened.

One of the main themes at the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit will be “Development and Africa.” Japan intends to ensure that the outcomes of TICAD IV in May and the voice of Africa expressed there be reflected in the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit. Moreover, on healthcare, education and poverty reduction, many African countries face major challenge of achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) whose common deadline is 2015. Japan would like to contribute to strengthening healthcare systems and to combating infectious diseases, including the cooperation to the Global Fund. This year marks the half-way

point between the declaration of the MDGs and their deadline of 2015 and, for this and other reasons, I want to hold vigorous discussions about the initiatives the G8 should engage in.

(Ownership and the Support of Japan)

President John Kufuor, Chairperson of the African Union, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, the honorable presidents, everyone:

Japan has consistently favored the self-help efforts of African countries, advocating the importance of the ownership of development, and has emphasized the need for the international community to support efforts by Africa itself. In this sense, as I noted earlier, the development of the AU as an organization that represents all of Africa is truly a great blessing. In particular, the role the AU plays in the peace and security sector in Africa is extremely important.

In this regard, Prime Minister Fukuda recently declared Japan's intention to aim to be a "Peace Fostering Nation," a country that actively cooperates with the maintenance, restoration, and building of peace in the world and contributes to the welfare and development of human society. Japan has recently decided to provide support to the PKO training centers already existing in Africa in order to support the efforts of the AU and African countries to enhance its capacity of maintaining peace. This represents a step forward from the previous support provided by Japan and is expected to make a contribution to the early deployment of the United Nations-AU hybrid mission in Darfur (UNAMID) and the AU mission to Somalia (AMISOM), and therefore to the building of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) that the AU has proposed. Japan will combine this support for peace-building with support addressing humanitarian crises, including droughts and floods which struck Africa last year. Japan's emergency and additional contribution to Africa will come to approximately \$264.5 million. Going forward, as a "Peace Fostering Nation" Japan intends to continue to contribute to the peace and security of Africa through these cooperations.

(Feeling toward Africa)

My feeling toward Africa is special.

In my policy speech during the official visit to Africa as Japan's prime minister in 2001, I stated that "there will be no stability and prosperity in the world . . . unless the problems of Africa are resolved." This is my firm conviction as someone who can claim to be a friend of Africa. Moreover, it is the foundation of Japan's policy towards Africa.

I visited a refugee camp in Kenya at that time, and strongly felt the anger, sadness, and sense of the inability to realize justice that Africa is still facing today. Nonetheless, at the same time, the smiling, untroubled faces of the African children I talked to taught me that a strong sense of hope exists in Africa. It was these children of Africa who taught me that individually we are like one drop of water from a great ocean, so it is important for human beings to work together with their fellow human beings.

In Africa, many Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers are working hard with the children of Africa even at this very moment. The shining eyes of children who are full of life and joy are the greatest reward for these young people of Japan who came to Africa. The children are the future of Africa. I would like to remind you all again of my conviction that, as a person involved in politics, I must work towards a bright future for these children filled with hope.

I understand that the theme of this 10th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU is the "Industrial Development of Africa." In TICAD, Japan has advocated the promotion of Asia-Africa cooperation, that is, the development approach of Asia which achieved economic growth driven by trade and investment. I

believe that Japan can contribute to poverty reduction through economic growth in Africa, utilizing the development experience of Asia. Moreover, if TICAD IV and the G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit could contribute to the hope and future of the children of Africa, nothing could give me more pleasure.

President John Kufuor, Chairperson of the African Union, Professor Alpha Oumar Konaré, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The climate change issue has been touched upon by His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon, Secretary General of the United Nations. At present, our earth faces grave danger. There are too many examples to enumerate. Iceberg in the North Pole is collapsing. Perennially-frozen ice at the top of the Himalaya Mountains are also melting, and such countries as Nepal and Bhutan on the foot of Himalaya Mountains are facing the potential of large scale flood caused by collapse of glacial lake. On the other hand, sea level is rising in the Pacific Ocean. It is said that if the sea level rises by 50 cm, such small island states as Tuvalu and Kiribati may submerge.

Facing this situation, Japan accelerates its efforts to tackle global warming. Prime Minister Fukuda announced his “Cool Earth Promotion Program” and expressed his intention to establish quantified national target for the greenhouse gas emissions reductions for the first time. He also revealed his new financial mechanism “Cool Earth Partnership” on the scale of US\$10 billion.

From the 19th Century to the 20th Century, our earth enjoyed prosperity with the development of science and technology. During this period, however, we also suffered from continuous wars and massacres. I believe that we should aim to live comfortably on this planet in the 21st century. As well, Africa is still abundant in greens, water, and nature; therefore, Africa can show the model of the 21st century. I am confident that the successes of the AU general assembly, TICADIV, and G8 Hokkaido Toyako Summit will help making 21st century African age.

Thank you for listening.

(End)