

**Opening Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan,
at the Fifth Thematic Session of
the Fifth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V):
“Enhancement of Peacebuilding”**

Sunday, June 2, 2013, 9:00 - 12:00

Intercontinental Hotel, Yokohama, Japan

[Draft]

Your Excellency Mr. Dioncounda Traoré, Interim President of the Republic of Mali,
Your Excellency Amb. Ramtane Lamamra, Commissioner for Peace and Security of the
African Union,
Your Excellencies, Heads of African States and Governments and Heads of Delegations,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish to begin my remarks by expressing my sincere respect to all those who are actively working, day and night, for the peace and stability of Africa.

Japan is acutely aware of how peace is a fundamental source of growth. Japan achieved its prosperity by learning the value of peace from history and in preserving peace, was able to build a secure society. This is why TICAD has consistently placed great emphasis on peace and stability.

In the 2000's, with many countries achieving peace and stability, Africa overcame an era in which it suffered from conflicts and instability and obtained the foundations for growth. Taking the occasion of the 20th anniversary of TICAD, I would like to celebrate this fact with you.

However, it is also a fact that conflicts and elements of instability remain, especially in the Sahara belt ranging from the Sahel region to Somalia, as well as the Great Lakes Region. Now, as Africa tries to achieve rapid growth through trade and investment, we should continue to make efforts to enhance peacebuilding in order to establish a society in which people are able to engage in socio-economic activities, with a sense of security.

Guided by three principles learned over the last 20 years of TICAD, Japan is determined to walk together with Africa and the international community towards the day when Africa becomes a land of peace.

The first of these guiding principles is that the key to peace and stability lies in Africa's own will and efforts towards conflict resolution. Japan wishes to support Africa's

determination to overcome challenges through capacity building of its people and institutions.

The second guiding principle is the idea that the foundation for a peaceful and stable society is the well-being of each individual living in that society. Japan will strengthen its efforts to eliminate the causes of conflicts and instability and nurture the grounds for peace and stability, by addressing insecurity and grievances that arise from extreme poverty, inequality, and gender-related issues, as well as vulnerable governance.

The third guiding principle is the importance of peacebuilding efforts by the international community, including United Nations peacekeeping operations and the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. We will actively participate in efforts conducted by the international community and reinforce partnership with international actors.

Mr. Chairperson,

Here, I would like to raise the issue of the Sahel region, which is a new challenge for the international community.

The Sahel region is known as a region where the Mali Empire and the Songhai Empire once flourished. In that era, the Sahel region, which prospered through its trade of gold and rock salt, was the core of northern and western African prosperity, serving as the crossroads for trade and cultural exchanges between the Arab and African worlds. Traces of this can be found in the traditions and cultures that bring together the essences of various West African cultures, as well as in the valuable ruins, such as that of Timbuktu, or the “City of Gold,” fascinating those who visit.

However, the Sahel now faces a multitude of difficult challenges, including poverty, conflict and instability and cross-border issues. This is a matter of profound sadness.

Against this backdrop, in January of this year, a hostage incident took place in Algeria, imparting a tremendous shock to the Japanese people. Through this incident, Japan came to solemnly realize once again that stability in the Sahel region, which connects North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa, is indispensable to the prosperity of northern and western Africa. At the same time, we were moved by the fact that, in this region, a large number of Japanese, together with the local people, are working hard every day.

It is our sincere wish that the Sahel region restores peace and stability and recovers its place as the center of prosperity in northern and western Africa. In order to do so, we must take action together now.

To transform this determination into concrete actions, we recently invited various people actively working towards stability and development in the countries of the Sahel region to Japan and discussed in depth the actions needed at present. Through this process, urgent issues have been identified.

The first is to build resilient countries and societies that do not tolerate instability. In other words, we need to overcome vulnerabilities through measures such as socio-economic development and strengthening of governance. Another urgent issue is to strengthen Africa's own capacity in maintaining stability and security. The discussions also pointed out the importance of strengthening partnerships with the countries of the Sahel region.

In light of these, I would like to take this opportunity to announce that Japan will implement three concrete measures to assist the Sahel region.

First, Japan will provide 100 billion yen in assistance over five years for the development and stability of the Sahel. We believe that the assistance we provide in line with the concept of Human Security, such as strengthening of social systems, with particular focus on food, education and health, as well as assistance towards self-reliance of women and youth, will bring hope for economic development to the people of the region, thereby contributing to stability in the region.

Second, we will provide assistance to enhance the capability of the countries of the Sahel to enable them to engage in counter-terrorism and the maintenance of security. By providing capacity-building support in security and counter-terrorism sectors, we will train 2,000 persons for counter-terrorism and security maintenance activities.

Third, we will build a framework for dialogue with the Sahel region in a multi-layered manner and foster an even stronger solid relationship with the region. By strengthening safety measures, we will support the activities of the Japanese who live and work together with the people of the Sahel.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Sahel region is known as a region with a severe natural environment. However, the very warm nature of the people who live there, bright and robust, with a spirit of mutual assistance, encourages and moves people who visit. Moreover, a beautiful culture that embodies the way these people live has been carefully handed down over time.

Japan, as a friend that loves the people and the culture of the Sahel region, wishes to continue to walk together with the people of the Sahel region.

Thank you very much.