

(Provisional Translation)

1st TICAD V Ministerial Meeting: Opening Ceremony

Speech by His Excellency Mr. Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs

May 4, 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

H.E. Mr. Philemon Yang, Prime Minister of the Republic of Cameroon ,

H.E. Mr. Pierre Moukoko Mbonjo, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Cameroon,

H.E. Mr. Anthony Mothae Maruping, Commissioner for Economic Affairs, African Union Commission,

I am Fumio Kishida, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan.

Ministers, ambassadors, representatives of countries and institutions, delegation members, ladies and gentlemen:

First of all, on behalf of the TICAD co-organizers, the African Union Commission, The United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme, and the World Bank, I would like to express my heartfelt welcome to all the participants to the First TICAD V Ministerial Meeting.

I would also like to express our deep gratitude to Prime Minister Yang, Foreign Minister Moukoko Mbonjo, and other officials of the Government of Cameroon for their generous cooperation in hosting this conference.

As the proverb goes, “Those who drink the water of Africa shall return to Africa.” Following my visit to Ethiopia in March last year, I have come to Africa again as foreign minister of Japan. I am extremely delighted to be here in Cameroon to see the familiar faces I met at TICAD V.

Ladies and gentlemen,

TICAD V in Yokohama of last June proved a major success. Participants set out clear objectives over the next five years. Above all, TICAD V changed Japan.

First of all, it changed Prime Minister Abe. He spoke with all of the visiting African leaders, and was convinced that Africa's dynamism and potential are genuine. He promised to visit Africa himself and, true to his word, he brought with him more than 30 heads of Japan's leading corporations and organizations to visit Cote d'Ivoire, Mozambique, and Ethiopia in January this year. He was received with a tremendous welcome wherever he visited, and he had opportunities to speak with the leaders of a total of 13 countries.

Next, TICAD V changed Japan's business community. Japanese corporations opened their eyes widely to Africa's potential as a resource supplier and a market. Recognizing Africa as an important business partner for Japan, they have come to believe that now is the time to expand into Africa and work with respective countries toward economic development.

More than anything else, TICAD V changed the Japanese people. Day after day, things about Africa appeared in media through TICAD V, and the Japanese public turned its attention to Africa's vibrancy. Approximately 60,000 people visited the venue during TICAD V, encountering African products and culture, thereby gaining a real sense of Africa's potential and abundance.

The assistance measures put together by Japan were based on an assessment of those areas truly vital to Africa's economic development: infrastructure development, human resources, agriculture, education, health, peace and stability. The Government of Japan demonstrated its determination to mobilize up to 32 billion dollars to address these issues in both public and private sectors. TICAD V transformed Japan's expectations for Africa's potential into unshakable convictions, prompting Japan to further transcend words into action for Africa's development. Japan will continue to view rapidly growing Africa as a frontier for its foreign policy, and will seek to strengthen mutually beneficial economic ties with Africa by expanding trade and investment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am extremely pleased that we come together once again to speak about Africa's future, after a year from TICAD V. The agenda for this ministerial meeting includes not only debates on specific measures for realizing the objectives of TICAD V, but also discussions on the topics of agriculture, post-2015 development agenda, and women and youth. All three are issues of profound significance.

First, agriculture plays an important role in economic growth and poverty reduction as Africa's largest economic sector. The African Union (AU) has designated this year the "Year of Agriculture and Food Security in Africa" and undertaken efforts in that regard. Japan supports such efforts as an international partner, and Prime Minister Abe held a Japan-African Regional Economic Communities (RECs) Summit Roundtable at the margins of the United Nations General Assembly last September and solicit opinions on agricultural development. Furthermore, Senior Vice-Minister Eto of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has made a particular point of coming to this ministerial meeting. All of these show the determination of the Government to play an even active role in developing African agriculture.

Second, next year is the target year for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the international community has begun in earnest considering a "Post-2015 Development Agenda" to be adopted next year. Real and significant progress can be made if Japan and Africa join hands in moving forward this consideration. The AU has prepared the "African Common Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda." I sincerely hope that this conference will serve as a venue for Japan and Africa to confirm the common ground and collaborate in going forward.

Third, efforts to support women's social advancement are important for Japan itself. Africa has for many years been actively mainstreaming women in development and business. For this, I am convinced that Japan and Africa can share our experiences. Another key to development is how to secure employment for youth and incorporate them into the economy, as they make up a large percentage of Africa's population.

Japan's cooperation with Africa on these three important agenda is the manifestation of Japan's implementation of its policy of "Proactive Contribution to Peace," a fundamental principle of diplomacy Japan pursues. Without Africa, the global peace, stability and prosperity that we envision will not be complete. I am convinced that Japan's "Proactive Contribution to Peace" will serve as a new bond connecting Japan and Africa.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Africa is moving dynamically down the path to further growth and a brilliant future. Bright as this path might be, though, difficulties may emerge from time to time. However, we gained two compasses from TICAD V: the Yokohama Declaration 2013 and the Yokohama Action Plan 2013-2017. We are convinced of Africa's potential and, using these compasses, we will chart our course together to move toward the brilliant future that Africa is seeking.

This ministerial meeting is one step on that path, and I will conclude my remarks by expressing my sincerest hopes that fruitful discussions with all of you will make this meeting a success.

Thank you.