

(Provisional Translation)

1st TICAD V Ministerial Meeting

Special Session: “Empowering Women and Youth”

Keynote Address by Fumio Kishida, Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministers, ladies and gentlemen,

1. Introduction

It is my great pleasure to be able to hold this special session on empowerment for women and youth for the first time at the TICAD Ministerial Meeting.

Women in Africa perform key roles in managing the household budgets that support their families, while young people are the bearers of Africa’s future. Empowerment of women and youth is directly tied to the stability of African society and the development and upgrading of African industry.

Japan has consistently maintained through TICAD V and Prime Minister Abe’s visit to Africa that Japan will focus Japan’s diplomacy to women and youth, each and every one of them. Under Prime Minister Abe’s leadership, Japan will also position young people and women as centers of growth in Japan and will seek to build their capacity.

2. Empowering Women towards “A Society in Which All Women Shine”

Ladies and gentlemen,

I took a particular note of the African Union Commission’s Strategic Plan 2014-2017, as it positions mainstreaming women and youth as one of eight key priorities. After reading the plan, I derived two important perspectives for empowering women in Africa.

One is promoting the social advancement of women and building their capacities.

From farming villages to urban settings, women constitute an important workforce. Nevertheless, women in villages find it more difficult than men to receive technical training

and financing to expand their production and generate greater earnings. Women are not sufficiently involved in the decision making process on the types of products to be grown and the timing of harvests.

In view of this, Japan has been working to ensure the participation of women in agricultural management and providing assistance aimed at boosting the revenues of small-scale farmers in particular women, thereby steadily achieving positive results. For example in Kenya, as mentioned in the plenary session on “Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security” by Senior Vice-Minister Mr. Eto, with the implementation of the “Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment Project” (SHEP), the earnings of recipient farmers doubled and the earnings disparity between men and women decreased from approximately 30% to 15%.

Women entrepreneurs have also distinguished themselves in today’s Africa. Nevertheless, women still have limited access to markets and society, and they find it difficult to take advantage of new economic opportunities.

Accordingly, the public and private sectors need to collaborate in identifying the difficulties faced by women entrepreneurs and make concerted efforts to improving their situations. In this context, Japan invited African Government officials engaged in assisting women entrepreneurs, as well as African women entrepreneurs engaged in pioneering work including women empowerment, to a seminar titled “Empowerment of Women through Entrepreneurship” last January. Japan will continue with such efforts.

Active roles and social advancement of women are equally important in our country. In September, Japan is planning to hold an international symposium aimed at realizing societies in which all women shine. We would like to invite participants from Africa as well, and it is our sincere hope that the outcomes of this symposium will lead to greater support for women in Africa.

The second important perspective is advancing the participation and protection of women in the areas of peace and security.

This entails seeing women as agents for peace. Efforts must be made to ensure their participation in all stages of conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding, to

prevent infringements of women's rights in conflicts, and to protect women.

While bolstering its collaboration with UN Women and the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Sexual Violence in Conflict, Japan has been addressing the problem of impunity for sexual violence and strengthening judicial systems. Japan will also assist Africa's own efforts, such as by supporting measures to combat sexual violence within the framework of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA).

Japan will be actively participating in, and contributing to, the Global Summit to End Sexual Violence in Conflict to be held in June in London.

When African women shine, Africa will most certainly be truly radiant. Japan will spare no efforts in empowering women in cooperation with Africa.

| | |---| | 3. Empowering Youth: a Bright Future for Africa's Youth | |---|

Ladies and gentlemen,

Along with women, young people play an important role in growth and stability. Even so, two out of three young people are either unemployed or receiving low wages, sometimes leading to social and political instability.

The problem of youth unemployment arises from a mismatch between the young people seeking jobs and the skills being sought by employers. This is due to the lack of sufficient opportunities to educate and train youth.

In this context, Japan is steadily providing assistance to address such issues. At TICAD V, Japan announced to establish Human Resource Development Centers for business and industry in ten African countries, and decided to establish its first center in Ethiopia. In addition, under the ABE Initiative to invite 1000 young people to Japan for training needed to become future business leaders, Japan will begin accepting 150 trainees in September.

A bright future for Africa's youth will open the way to a bright future for Africa. Japan will accompany Africa on this path as a close partner.

4. Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

Ms. Rumiko Seya, President of the Japan Center for Conflict Prevention, is participating as a panelist today. She has focused on women and youth in undertaking peacebuilding projects in Somalia, Kenya and elsewhere from a civil society standpoint. I hope that Ms. Seya will broaden our discussions on the basis of her own experiences. In closing, I sincerely hope that today's discussions will be a milestone for realizing a society in which all women shine, as well as to bring about a bright future for the young people in Africa.

Thank you.

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