

Remarks by Mr. Kenji Yamada,
Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at Plenary 4 of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting
on October 7, 2018 in Tokyo

Thank you, Co-chair.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

“Connectivity” can boost Africa’s development by scaling up integration within Africa and beyond.

This is why Japan has been enhancing connectivity in physical, institutional, and digital terms as well as people to-people connectivity.

First of all, to enhance physical connectivity, which entails expanding regional market and integrating it to the global economy, improvement of transportation infrastructure is crucial.

A serious deficiency in supply of quality infrastructure against the huge demand has been the major challenge to

Africa's economic development. In order to fill this gap, Japan is actively financing quality infrastructure development, in tandem with the AU initiative "PIDA", the "Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa". For example, we support development of the following three corridors by developing master plans and investing in infrastructure projects: "The East Africa - Northern Corridor Project" in Kenya as a gateway to East Africa; "The Nacala Corridor Project" in Mozambique, with ample potential of mineral resources; and "The West Africa Growth Ring Project" in West Africa where urbanization is rapidly progressing. These connectivity projects are supposed to be the "game changer" for both landlocked and coastal countries.

We are also supporting the expansion of the Port of Toamasina, the largest commercial port in Madagascar, and the construction of National Highway 1 in Djibouti, which connects Djibouti Port and Addis Ababa.

These infrastructure projects are all designed to boost connectivity between inland and costal countries on the

continent, into the global value chain, including Japan.

Aiming to realize a free and open Indo-Pacific, Japan will continue to promote quality infrastructure within and beyond Africa.

Secondly, I would like to touch upon institutional and digital connectivity.

Without efficient institutional connectivity, the benefit of physical infrastructure cannot be maximized.

In this context, Japan welcomes the signing of “the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area,” or AfCFTA, this March in Kigali.

With participation of all African countries, AfCFTA has a potential to become one of the largest FTAs with a total population of 1.2 billion and GDP of 2.5 trillion dollars.

In order to enhance institutional connectivity in Africa, Japan has been promoting smooth border crossing of people and goods by establishing "One Stop Border Post" in 14 locations across the continent.

This facility eliminates the need for passengers and goods to stop twice for border crossing procedures, reducing considerable time and cost for transporters and travelers.

Take the Tanzania-Rwanda border for example.

The transit time was reduced by two-thirds, the traffic volume doubled, and the transport volume increased significantly.

We also need to pay close attention to digital connectivity as it will benefit the continent to achieve socio-economic transformation.

Last week, the construction of optical submarine cables laid in the South Atlantic, linking Angola and Brazil, was completed.

It enables high speed data transmissions and spurs trade and economic growth in both regions.

Lastly, let me also emphasize the importance of people-to-people connectivity, in terms of education, tourism, culture, and sports. In the education sector, it is well known that the African Union has established the Pan African University to strengthen higher education and research in Africa.

This is a unique network of African Universities offering quality post-graduate education.

Japan has been supporting the Pan-Africa University initiative by the AU through Jomo Kenyatta University, by extending technical assistance and funding since its inception. Jomo Kenyatta University, as the platform for basic science and innovation, is a partner institute leading the five flagship initiatives of the Pan African University.

Japan also supports many national universities across the continent, including the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology, in cooperation with Japanese universities. We are delighted to see the two universities I mentioned becoming the hubs of innovation and the center

of excellence in Africa by accepting students from all over the continent.

Sports also have an enormous power of enhancing mutual understanding. Japan supported South Sudan's first nationwide sports festival, “the National Unity Day” in 2016. The event was a great success, and has now established itself as a much-awaited annual event in the country. With a view to the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020, Japan also promotes “Sport for Tomorrow” in over 200 countries, including in Africa, as a program for making international contributions through sports.

In 1964, at the Tokyo Olympic Games, the entire world was amazed by Mr. Abebe Bikila from Ethiopia winning a gold medal in marathon.

Even now many Japanese people do remember him as a hero.

We are very much looking forward to welcoming African people to Tokyo and to seeing outstanding performances

of African athletes again in the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 as well as in the Rugby World Cup 2019.

In concluding my remark, given the importance of the enhanced “connectivity” in terms of physical, institutional, digital and people-to-people aspects for further leveraging African development, Japan considers “connectivity” to be one of the main cross-cutting topics that definitely need to be discussed at TICAD 7 next year in Yokohama.

Thank you.