

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe,
Prime Minister of Japan
at Japan-Africa Business Forum**

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to participate in the Japan-Africa Business Forum held today in such a grand scale with the attendance of the leaders of many leading companies and organizations from both Japan and Africa, thanks to the sponsorship of the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO).

This morning, the Public-Private Business Dialogue, a new departure of TICAD7 took place as a plenary session, in which Japanese and African companies took the podium as major actors. Africa, which continues to grow steadily, is now our partner that grow together. In addition, TICAD is transforming itself into a new forum focusing on business. I heard that participants had in-depth discussions in this

Dialogue, including improving business environment in Africa, which is greatly expected by Japanese companies.

Why does Africa strongly call for Japanese companies to expand their business there? The answer is the dedication and devotion shown by Japanese companies in developing human resources, transferring technology and walking hand in hand together with local communities make a deep impression on the hearts of African people.

As Africa continues to grow, investment is rapidly increasing from all over the world, mainly from emerging countries amid growing demand for foreign investment. It is high time that the Japanese companies should respond to Africa's calls for investment, taking advantage of this opportunity.

The Japanese government will make all-out efforts, such as expanding the ABE Initiative, in order to give Japanese companies full support for their expansion in Africa. As NEXI, Nippon Export and Investment Insurance has led the way, further attempts to move forward will be made through the Japan Business Council for Africa among others.

Recently, the number of large-scale investment projects by Japanese companies jointly with partners of African and third countries has increased. I have high expectations for further development of business relations among companies of Africa, Japan and third countries, as they will take advantage of this Business Forum as a big springboard to build broader business relationships, as well as making good use of the occasion of the Business Expo organized by JETRO.

After this opening session, about 40 companies and organizations in total will announce nearly 110 Memorandum of Understandings (MOU) in various business fields such as agriculture, medical-health, education, electricity, energy and insurance. This is very encouraging for our future, as it shows that business, coming out of TICAD, is being expanded.

I hope that all of you, both public and private sectors from all the African countries will deepen your understanding of Japanese businesses and of advanced technologies of Japanese companies, to establish long-term partnerships with them.

And I would like to ask all the Japanese private companies to take advantage of this great opportunity. I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my hope that African and Japanese private sectors strengthen their relationship even further through today's Business Forum.

Thank you very much.

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