

**KEYNOTE SPEECH BY  
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**7th Tokyo International Conference on African Development  
(TICAD 7).**

**Theme: “Advancing Africa's Development through People,  
Technology and Innovation”**

**Date: August 29, 2019.**

**Yokohama City, Japan.**



**THE  
AFROCHAMPIONS  
INITIATIVE**



## “Using the AfCFTA to transform Africa: A Great Opportunity for the Private Sector”

1. Good morning Excellencies, dignitaries, Ladies and Gentlemen. Join me in thanking His Excellency Prime Minister Abe Shinzo and the people of Japan for the very warm reception we have all been enjoying so far. I am profoundly honoured to be invited to deliver a keynote speech at this year’s Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 7). TICAD 7 promises to be very splendid given that Japan is a country with 7 Gods of Good Fortune.
2. Ladies and Gentlemen, the African private sector is growing from strength to strength with growing confidence. African businesses are not only binding the continent of Africa together through cross-border trade and investment, African firms are also beginning to globalize by expanding into other continents and striking landmark deals with global giants everywhere including Japan.
3. Witness for example, the recent teaming up of South Africa’s NASPERS and Japan’s Rakuten to disrupt the global classifieds industry. And behold how Africa has provided a fertile landscape for some of Japanese dream-builder, Softbank’s boldest plans for solar and mobile globally.
4. While we celebrate such milestones, we also recognize that the potential for the African private sector to transform both Africa and the World, is still threatened by Africa’s limited influence in global institutions. There is therefore a need for more intense collaboration within the African private sector and an equally urgent imperative for networks of African entrepreneurial ecosystems and business leaders to think, learn and act global. **And this is precisely the mission and mandate of AfroChampions.**
5. It is a mandate to position Africa’s private sector and Africa’s future-builders in the corridors of power, both on the continent and abroad. Since 2016, and with inspiration from our AfroChampions Club Chair – Mr Aliko Dangote – and the support of our partner the African Union, and the multinational CEOs that form

our members -- we have pursued this mission through our unique innovative public-private partnerships and flagship programs. The AfroChampions Initiative is positioning itself on all fronts to make Africa, the World's oldest continent the planet's freshest and deepest source of dynamism, as indeed it should, being also the home of the world's most youthful population.

6. **Above all however**, the AfroChampions Initiative derives its greatest impetus from the greatest of all global spectacles unfolding before our very eyes: **the birth of the African Continental Free Trade Area and the emergence of African Multinationals as the torchbearers of that unification vision.**
7. **The AfCFTA is a new geopolitical Giant in the making.** It will be the world's largest regional free trade area, with a market of 1.2 billion people across 55 countries, and GDP of \$6.3 trillion in Purchasing Power Parity terms. The AfCFTA could therefore potentially become the single biggest business opportunity in Africa's history thus far.
8. However, in order for the AfCFTA to truly succeed, there is urgent need for a major series of infrastructural, industrial and commercial investments to open up Africa's transport and logistics routes; for cheap energy to industrialize the continent; and for green commercial hubs that add value to talent, value to agriculture and value to natural resources. **These are all great investment opportunities. But at the moment there is no Framework to guide the private sector on how to invest in these opportunities.**
9. **That is why AfroChampions is launching, in October 2019, the AfCFTA Private Sector Investment & Financing Framework**, an Africa-led global initiative to attract the investments and financing required to make the African Continental Free Trade Area succeed.
10. **Our goal is to use this Framework to mobilize the private sector, in Africa and beyond, to recognize the AfCFTA not as just another trade treaty, but rather as one of the Great Investment Opportunities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.** This way, they can see beyond a trade treaty, they can take advantage of the AfCFTA to invest in and industrialize Africa.

11. In the next 10 years – between 2020 and 2030 – our goal is to use the Framework to catalyze and coordinate a network of mega investment financing amounting to \$1 trillion for **AfCFTA Accelerated Commercial, Industrial, Infrastructural and Regional projects**. We seek to do this as private sector partners of African governments to deliver on the AU's Agenda 2063 vision.
12. This is undoubtedly the most opportune time for global actors, inspired by the actions of such forward-looking stakeholders as the Government of Japan, to join hands with AfroChampions, the African private sector, African Governments and the African Union in investing in AfCFTA. **Together we can set new global mega trends in Agriculture, climate change, Digitalization, Youth entrepreneurship, the 4th Industrial Revolution and Green Infrastructure.**
13. We entreat the Government of Japan to continue to be a global Ambassador for Africa, lighting the lamp-posts for the global political community to pledge their support and invest in the Africa Union and the \$1 Trillion AfCFTA Private Sector Investment & Financing Framework.
14. With the continued support of all our dear and powerful friends, such as Japan, **Africa looks forward to a partnership that will move what was once the Cradle of Ancient Humanity to the Cradle of New Humanity.**
15. Let's all hear it for Africa. Because, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, this indeed is the Century of the Pax Africana!
16. We thank everyone most sincerely,
17. ありがとうございます (Arigatōgozaimashita)