

**Statement by H.E. Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan**

**The Opening remarks for  
the TICAD Ministerial Meeting**

**(26 March 2022)**

Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Thank you for joining us today. I am very pleased to host the TICAD Ministerial Meeting. I now declare the opening of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting. I would like to start by saying a few words on this occasion.

One of the biggest changes to hit Africa since TICAD 7 is COVID-19. The pandemic has brought some economic and social vulnerabilities to the forefront.

In addition, Russia's recent aggression against Ukraine is a unilateral change of the status quo by force and an act that shakes the very foundations of the international order. The issue at stake is not to choose which side to stand on. What is important is to defend the principles that the international community should stand on, such as the United Nations Charter prohibiting the threat or use of force and basic human rights. Russia's aggression against Ukraine disregards these fundamental principles. It also affects energy and food supply, and the African economy is no exception. Therefore, the international community needs to address the situation in a concerted manner to protect the life of African people. Now is the time for Japan and Africa to work together to create a sustainable society and Japan looks forward to a candid exchange of views.

Japan has contributed to Africa's development including through TICAD, with its history of over a quarter of a century. Under the principle of human security, Japan will continue to support the realization of Agenda 2063 and the Sustainable Development Goals, with an emphasis on "people" and

“quality growth”. Based on these thoughts, I would like to state three ideas.

Firstly, in order to build a resilient economy for build back better, Japan will support private companies’ expansion into Africa. Today, we are joined by Mr. Iwai, Chairman of the Africa Project Team of Keizai Doyukai, who can share business perspective. We also recognize entry into force of the African Continental Free Trade Area as Africa’s political will towards regional integration. We should capitalize on this momentum and use the power of the private sector as a driving force to set out a pathway for development in the post-COVID-era.

Secondly, based on the principle of human security, we will redouble our efforts, towards a sustainable and resilient society in the health sector where vulnerabilities have been exposed by the pandemic, with a view to achieving universal health coverage. In addition, we will commit to human resources development of those who will contribute to African development in the post-COVID-era as well as to the resolution of pressing environmental issues.

Thirdly, universal values such as freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law have been seriously challenged. Against this backdrop, Japan is determined to establish a free and open international order based on the rule of law under the vision of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)”. In cooperation with African countries, we will aim to realize peace and prosperity in the Asia-Africa region, and the world as a whole.

In today’s “Economy” session, we will discuss measures to address economic disparities and achieve sustainable and inclusive growth. In order to achieve build back better and promote the SDGs, it is important to encourage more private investment, while leveraging digital and other means.

Therefore, looking ahead to TICAD 8, Japan will propose specific measures to support solution-oriented businesses on social issues, with particular focus on startups. In addition, we will cooperate to expand “green” related businesses with a view to promoting decarbonization as a new driving force for Africa's development.

It is also important to strengthen a free and open rule-based international economic system. In particular, it is urgent for us to address the development finance not adhering to international rules and standards including unfair and opaque lending practices.

For example, there are cases where the lending country influences the policy decisions of the borrowing country through forcing the borrowing country to accept in advance a contractual clause that enables the lending country to receive a lump sum repayment on the reason of a policy change occurred in the borrowing country that is disadvantageous to the lending country. There are also cases where the lending country acquires the long-term operating rights of the developed port in the event that the debt cannot be repaid. We must not allow such financing practices to prevail and destabilize the developing economies most in need of financial resources.

Japan will work with international organizations to create an environment in which developing countries, especially those in Africa, do not have to rely on such financing, through capacity-building support in the area of debt management.

What measures do you think should be taken to pave the way for further growth of African economies?

Thank you for your attention.