



Foreword



Mr HAYASHI Yoshimasa,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, Japan



As co-organizers of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), have long worked closely together for African development through the TICAD process. The solidarity of the international community is crucial at a time when the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic continues to cast a deep shadow over the development of Africa. Japan intends to continue to be actively engaged in African development together with UNDP. TICAD is a pioneering forum with a history of more than a quarter century as an international conference to discuss African development. Its eighth edition, TICAD 8, will be held in Tunisia on 27-28 August.

At TICAD 8 there are two trends in the international community that should be born in mind. The first is the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the most critical changes affecting Africa since TICAD 7. It has caused a slowdown of the economic growth, loss of employment and

educational opportunities in Africa, and severely impacted the most vulnerable populations, including women, youth and the poor, with concerns over deepening inequalities. How to 'Build Back Better' from COVID-19 pandemic will be a major priority for the future of African development.

The second trend is the threat to a free and open international order based on the rule of law. The world is currently at a turning point not seen since the end of the Cold War at the end of the 20th century. Russia's aggression against Ukraine has made this shift in our time clear for all to see. It has also disrupted global energy and food supplies, beginning to have a profound impact on African economies and societies. In addition, unfair and opaque development finance have saddled some African countries with massive debt, hindering their sustainable development.

Prime Minister Kishida has expressed the idea of transforming various social issues into engines of economic growth to realize sustainable economic growth. Africa, which faces various challenges, such as widening inequalities, global warming, terrorism and conflict, can be a place to implement global initiatives based on such principles. Africa is now recognized as a 'treasure trove of growth', with an expected increase in population, especially the young. To co-create a sustainable and resilient world, Japan would like to achieve concrete outcomes with Africa, as a partner who grows together not as a donor or recipient country, under an approach unique to Japan, which places an emphasis on "investment in people" and "quality growth".

TICAD 8 will be the first large-scale international conference since the outbreak of the pandemic, where many leaders from Japan and Africa will meet in-person and provide a diplomatic opportunity of an extreme value. We would like to demonstrate Japan's strong commitment as a reliable partner and to provide an opportunity for African countries and TICAD co-organizers to discuss ways in which Japan and Africa can work together to create a sustainable world, with a view to the post-COVID-19 era.

