

Remarks by H.E. Mr. Kentaro Sonoura
State Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
At Africa Day Reception

Venue: Sophia University

May 25, 2017 18:00-

- Ambassadors of African countries to Japan,
- Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honor to speak at the Africa Day Reception, representing the Government of Japan. Today, on the 54th anniversary of the founding of the Organization of African Unity, with one more member of the African Union compared to last year, I would like to extend my warmest congratulations on and respect to Africa's recent remarkable development.

In January next year, the Mission of Japan to the African Union is expected to open. With this new mission in Addis Ababa,

at the heart of the African diplomacy, Japan will further strengthen the bond with the African Union and African countries.

As Africa's close partner, Japan has been committed to peace and development of Africa. At TICAD VI, held last August in Nairobi, for the first time in Africa, Prime Minister Abe announced to contribute to the future of Africa by investing 30 billion US dollars under public-private partnership from 2016 until 2018. TICAD VI welcomed more than 11,000 participants and 70 executives from about 100 companies and universities. The Government of Japan will continue to promote the expansion of private sector's activities in Africa.

As the members of the African Diplomatic Corps are well aware, TICAD Ministerial Meeting will be held this year in Maputo, Mozambique. This meeting will be an important opportunity, not only in terms of implementing the commitments made at TICAD V and VI, but also in terms of discussing the important issues that the international community is facing today.

The partnership between Japan and Africa is a wonderful asset that should be further enhanced, with the engagement of future generations. Up until now, under the “African Business Education Initiative”, or “ABE Initiative”, more than 820 talents from 48 African countries have had the opportunity to learn in Japan. I am sure that the “Africa Week” organized by Sophia University will contribute to developing mutual understanding and interest for the Japanese youth who will have close touch with Africa in the coming years.

With the kind cooperation from everyone here today, and hand-in-hand with my African friends, the Government of Japan will continue to move ahead for the brighter future of Africa.

I would like to conclude my remarks by expressing my sincere wishes for continued and enhanced relationship between Japan and Africa.

Thank you.

(End)