

**Opening Remarks by H.E. Mr. Taro Kono,  
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan  
at the Opening Session of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting in  
Maputo, Mozambique**

Your Excellency Filipe Nyusi, President of the Republic of Mozambique,

Honorable Ministers,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a great honour for me to declare the opening of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting to follow up on the outcome of TICAD VI, held for the first time in its history in Africa twelve month ago.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to President Nyusi, Minister Baloi and the people of Mozambique for hosting this TICAD Ministerial Meeting. I am personally very excited to set foot on this beautiful city of Acacias, gateways to the vast dynamic continent, for the first time as Foreign Minister of Japan, barely three weeks after taking office.

My heartfelt gratitude goes equally to my fellow co-organizers, without whom TICAD would never have come this far. TICAD has always been the lighthouse of Japan's diplomacy towards Africa.

It is about encouraging African ownership to realize resilient growth, combining efforts with international partners. To maximize outcomes, TICAD process ensures transparency and consistency of the follow-up activities to make clear that we faithfully fulfill our commitments.

I consider it an indispensable duty to press forward with what we have advanced so far. The opportunity Africa embraces is clear. The question is how we should work together to realize Africa's legitimate aspirations as reflected in Agenda 2063.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

TICAD VI held last year in Nairobi was a landmark in our partnership with Africa. Not only was it the first TICAD ever to be held on African soil, it elevated the relationship between Japan and Africa to a new level by significantly advancing public-private partnership for African development. A business mission with leaders from 77 companies and others accompanied Prime Minister Abe to Nairobi and as many as 73 MOUs were concluded between Japanese companies and their African counterparts. As Prime Minister Abe remarked, TICAD VI demonstrated the eagerness among the top Japanese business executives to grow together with Africa.

To build on this momentum, we have invited representatives from the Japanese business sector to Maputo. I am pleased to hear that Japanese and African private sectors, governments and international organizations engaged in fruitful discussions during this morning's side event.

Private sector development is the engine of self-sustaining growth of Africa, so what the public sector should do is to create an enabling environment for businesses to invest.

In this context, Japan has been actively engaged in negotiating bilateral investment agreements for high-quality investment in Africa. In this connection, I am delighted to announce that the

Japan-Kenya Investment Agreement signed in Nairobi last August will soon come into force. It will be Japan's third investment treaty concluded with African countries, following Egypt and Mozambique.

In the past one year, we have started investment treaty negotiations with others and we are planning to announce the launch of negotiations with more countries in the coming days. Owing to these latest developments, Japan will be working on new investment treaties with thirteen African countries in total.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

TICADVI marked an important milestone, not only for Japan's diplomacy towards Africa, but for the entire horizon of Japan's foreign policy. On the occasion of TICADVI, Prime Minister Abe announced the "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" which connects the two most vibrant and promising continents on the globe, Asia and Africa. Maintaining a free, open and rules-based maritime order based on the principles of international law, such as freedom of navigation as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is a cornerstone for peace, stability and prosperity of the world.

Based on this strategy, Japan will vigorously continue its efforts to secure unimpeded commerce and enhance connectivity between Asia and Africa including through quality infrastructure investment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In this Ministerial Meeting, we will follow up on the progress made across the three pillars of TICAD VI, building on the achievements in the six priority areas discussed at TICAD V.

In Plenary Session 1, we will verify the steady progress of efforts undertaken by all stakeholders and discuss measures to improve the effectiveness of project implementation. Transparency and openness we see here are what makes TICAD a TICAD and I am very proud that we have a robust follow-up mechanism, spearheaded by our ministerial meeting.

Plenary Session 2 will focus on the economic transformation for Africa's growth. The need for economic diversification and industrialization was stressed at TICAD VI. Concerted efforts by all stakeholders are essential to enhancing the role of the private sector including SMEs and local industries to achieve long-lasting sustainable growth in Africa. I am confident that the inclusiveness of TICAD will be of value in reinforcing the broad partnership.

Finally in Plenary Session 3, we will discuss how we can promote human security and resilient society. Human security is one of the many values Japan and Africa share in common.

The highlights of our discussion on social stability in Nairobi were the promotion of resilient health systems and achieving social stability. Realizing peaceful society, free from terrorism and violent extremism is a prerequisite for a shared prosperity. In this context, I strongly condemn the terrorist attack that took place

eleven days ago in Ouagadougou.

Issues related to maritime security was also discussed for the first time in TICAD VI. Addressing global issues such as climate change and natural disasters is another important human security agenda. I am saddened by the casualties caused by the landslide and flooding in Freetown last week. Let me express my sincere condolences to the bereaved and sympathies to all those who were affected.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As an African proverb goes, “Wisdom is like a Baobab tree; no individual can embrace it”. TICAD believes that by bringing together the wisdom of every stakeholder, we can achieve what no one country alone can realize. I sincerely hope that this Ministerial Meeting will be a one step forward for a brighter Africa.

Thank you for your attention.