TICAD Ministerial Meeting (6-7 October 2018)
Plenary 4: Strengthening connectivity for Africa and beyond
Co-Chair's Summary

The session on "Strengthening connectivity for Africa and beyond" was co-chaired by H.E. Thomas Kwesi Quartey, the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa (represented by Dr. Ayodele Odusola, Chief Economist of UNDP Africa). It was opened with introductory remarks by the Co-chairs, which provided the context for the discussion.

In the opening remarks, H.E. Mr. Quartey stressed the need to generate practical solutions in overcoming connectivity challenges faced, by understanding 'what works,' and by providing best practices from across Africa and the world towards the realization of Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030, which are integral in the TICAD platform. He underlined sentiments in ensuring quality and sustainable infrastructure that will drive global, social and economic development.

During the discussion that followed, delegates noted that the substantial strengthening of connectivity in wide-ranging levels and domains, such as physical connectivity, digital connectivity, institutional connectivity, and people-to-people connectivity is central to promote structural transformation, peace and prosperity in Africa. Connectivity is a cross-cutting enabler for SDGs and Agenda 2063. Enhanced partnership through strengthening South-South and Triangular cooperation and alliance between governments, private sector and development partners, is key to achieving this.

On physical connectivity, participants stressed the importance and urgency of upgrading road, rail, port and air infrastructure among others, which serve as the foundation of the Africa's engagement with the global trade as well as Africa's internal led-growth. In addition, the need to strengthen country's handling capacity for trade facilitation including imports and exports, distribution route development, the improvement of the frequency of shipments and the costs of freight, storage, distribution and related services were pointed out as possible areas requiring investments. Participants also highlighted the importance of developing and managing international ports in a way that is fair, open, and transparent as well as protection of African ownership and sovereignty. Overall, to enhance physical connectivity within and beyond Africa, it must be

exercised in such a way that ensures economic viability and fiscal soundness including debt sustainability.

On digital connectivity, participants stressed the importance of the development of substantive and technical human and institutional capacities to harness the "software", as the precondition for leaping the full benefit of the advanced digital infrastructure to accelerate economic development. In this context, the importance of scaling up investment in ICT networks as well as Science, Technology and Information (STI) was pointed out. Effective partnership with the private sector was also highlighted as the accelerator. Building on these, the enhancement of the institutional connectivity was also raised as the important area to advance the formulation of effective and vibrant economic zones, and participants commended the progress in this area such as the signing of the agreement establishing the African Continental Free trade Area (AfCFTA) in March 2018 and the Single African Air Transport Market (SAATM) signed in January 2018. Participants noted that the promotion of economic cooperation including through investment treaties and the facilitation of the cross border control greatly contribute to enhancing connectivity.

Improved physical / institutional infrastructure as well as enhanced digital networks can play important roles in "leaving no one behind" and make accelerated interaction among people possible. In addition to the corporate sector, the exchanges at individual level, among Africans in Africa and abroad, as well as between people of Africa and other areas can bring many benefits to Africa through promotion of cultural and sports exchange, taking the advantage of sport occasions such as Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020 and the 2019 Rugby World Cup, as well as tourism. It not only promotes mutual understanding but also enhances broad networks and unofficial financial flows to the benefit of accelerated development. Participants also reiterated the importance of people-to-people connectivity in education, where collaboration between the universities provide opportunities for higher education to African youths.

Lastly, participants also underlined the increasing influence and contribution of South-South and Triangular cooperation to the accelerated socio-economic development of Africa. In this regard, participants recognized that TICAD, building on its open and multi-stakeholder nature, has been evolving into the global platform for partnership and innovation for Africa's development, and thus needs to continue to innovate and evolve to effectively engage wide-ranging stakeholders and channel their efforts on regional integration and the sustainable and continued development of Africa.

Participants underscored the importance of expanding economic corridors, One Stop Border Post (OSBP) control, connecting landlocked countries and strengthening maritime capacity and security for ensuring connectivity in Africa.

Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Africa (represented by Dr. Ayodele Odusola, chief Economist of UNDP Africa), in her concluding remarks, recalled the increasing velocity of our global development, and the importance of a catalytic platform like the TICAD to further consolidate such developments in Africa. He referred to the ongoing reform of the UN Development system, and underlines the importance UN development system is attaching to partnership, networking and connectivity.

Participants reconfirmed the continued relevance of the subject of the session to accelerated and inclusive development of Africa towards achievement of SDGs and Africa's Agenda 2063, and agreed to further deepen the discussion towards TICAD 7, scheduled to take place in Yokohama, Japan, on 28- 30 August 2019.

An integrated and holistic connectivity is key. There is no need to reinvent the wheel – using existing continental frameworks and implementation modalities is also critical. Finally, it is important for TICAD7 to focus on connectivity coupled with strong partnership and collaboration among government and private sector and development partners.

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