

Side Event of TICAD Ministerial Meeting 2018

“Showcasing the Potential of Japanese SMEs to Africa”

Opening Address by Mr. Kiyoto Tsuji, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign  
Affairs

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Government delegations from African countries,  
Business representatives from Japan and Africa,

I am extremely pleased that the Business Side Event Part 2, “Showcasing the Potential of Japanese SMEs to Africa,” is being held ahead of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting and has attracted a large number of participants, including honorable ministers and government delegations from African countries as well as the representatives from the African Union Commission and representatives from Japanese companies.

Two major corporations that are frontrunners in terms of achieving business success in Africa, along with 11 Japanese SMEs that boast advanced and unique technologies, will make presentations today. All of these companies possess technologies or products that others cannot imitate.

SMEs account for the great majority of Japan’s companies, and it is well known that their advanced technology and unique creativity formed the foundation to Japan’s transformation into one of the world’s great economic powers after the World War II, despite being a small island nation. That being the case, I am convinced that the technologies and products possessed by the Japanese SMEs that will be introduced today will show the way to resolve the challenges African countries currently face, and can contribute significantly to Africa’s social and economic development in the future.

In the lead up to TICAD7 in Yokohama to be held in August next year, the Government of Japan is exploring initiatives to promote Japanese investment in Africa, and to support Africa’s socio-economic development.

Africa is a great frontier with high potential in various fields. In reality, Africa's economy is developing steadily with abundant natural resources and high rate of population growth. This year it is expected to achieve economic growth of 3.1%. Furthermore, politically, Africa has been making steady progress towards overcoming long-time strife and conflicts to restore peace and stability such as the resumption of diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, and the South Sudan peace agreement.

On the other hand, it is the fact that a large number of people in Africa are unable to access basic services such as health and hygiene, water and electricity. Japanese SMEs can play a great role to ensure that Africa overcomes these challenges while making steady progress towards socio-economic development. By all means, I hope that all the representatives of Japanese companies who make presentation today will make use of this opportunity as a foothold for entering the African market or expanding business there.

And I would like to ask all the ministers and government delegations from African countries to support these companies in entering the African market by improving business environments that enables them to contribute to Africa's economic development.

It is my hope that today's event will be meaningful to all those taking part, and will lead to business outcomes. I would like to conclude my address by hoping that the relationship between Japan and Africa gains further momentum toward the next year's TICAD7.