

Remarks by H.E. Taro KONO,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan
at the Closing Session of the TICAD Ministerial Meeting
on 7th October 2018 in Tokyo

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for your active contribution over the last two days. We could say that we had very fruitful discussions that have paved the way forward toward TICAD 7.

The gist of the discussions is outlined in the Co-chairs Summary that has just been distributed to you, but let me briefly go through the highlights.

In Plenary 1, we reviewed positive macroeconomic trends and commended recent achievements such as the signing of the Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), as well as national and regional efforts to improve societal resilience in areas including health, education, and disaster risk reduction. We also saw examples of improved governance such as peaceful power transitions and movements towards peace in some African countries. On the other hand, we recognized that challenges remain in every field, including the issue of debt

sustainability. I also reconfirmed the high expectations from Africa for increased private investment to the continent, especially towards Japanese companies. Japan is committed to enhancing public and private partnership with Africa.

In Plenary 2, we reaffirmed that economic diversification and value addition are necessary for sustainable development. As potential drivers of economic and social transformation, we identified areas including: modernization of the agricultural sector; fostering of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); and promotion of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI). We also reiterated the importance of enhancing the blue economy in tandem with promoting maritime security and the rule of law. We also recognized the need to address some bottlenecks urgently, as unsustainable debts and insufficient business environments hinder public-private investment. From this perspective, I was encouraged by the efforts of African counterparts to promote a fair, open and transparent business environment.

In Plenary 3, we identified progress made in the area of human security. We affirmed that the promotion of

universal health coverage (UHC) will remain key to enhancing the resilience and productivity of societies. We also emphasized the importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR) as African countries could be the most vulnerable to climate change impacts. Issues of rapid urbanization and demographic change were other important topics as well. Furthermore, we reaffirmed our determination to build a peaceful and stable region, placing importance on good governance, rule of law, and human rights. In these respects, it goes without saying that to find African solutions, African voices should be duly heard and reflected.

In Plenary 4, we took up the issue of “connectivity.” We developed our thoughts on how to enhance connectivity in terms of physical connectivity through quality infrastructure, connectivity through digital infrastructure and institutional harmonization, and people-to-people connectivity through exchange of people including in tourism, culture, sport and academia. We agreed that key infrastructure, including international ports, needs to be operated in a fair, open, and transparent manner.

In conclusion, I am confident that we are fully committed to working together towards the success of TICAD 7 and realization of Agenda 2063 and SDGs through the TICAD process.

Let me thank the co-organizers once again for their hard work and the tremendous amount of time they dedicated to making this meeting a success. I would also like to express my heartfelt appreciation to every single participant for your great contributions to the meeting. My special gratitude to Rwanda and Egypt, the incumbent and incoming AU chairs.

Our next destination is Yokohama. We will gather again next year at the end of August with increased momentum toward materializing our aspirations for development in Africa.

We look forward to seeing your Heads of States at the Summit next year.

I thank you.